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Total Cost of Credit	£10,512.00	Representative APR	11.2%	Total Amount Payable	£48,807.00

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Total Cost of Credit	£12,341.20	Representative APR	11.2%	Total Amount Payable	£56,836.20

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CONTENTS

CLICK EDITORIAL FEATURES

ALL THINGS LICENSING	68-69
BRIGHTON CAB TRADE VIEW	70-71
CALL CENTRE SERVICES	32-33
HEATHROW AIRPORT ADVICE	28
INSURANCE INSIGHTS	46
KNOW YOUR RIGHTS	74-75
MARKETING STRATEGY SUCCESS	62
SOCIAL MEDIA SAVVY	54
SPECIALIST TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS	12
STRENGTH IN STRATEGY	6-7
WHATSAPP TAXI BOOKINGS	60

CLICK NEWS FEATURES

BERNIE THE BOOK	79
BUS LANE BULLETIN	48
CARD PAYMENTS	18
FIT AND PROPER	16-17
GOVERNMENT NEWS	22
GREEN MEANS GO	50-51
HACKNEY FARES LEAGUE TABLE	72-73
JUST DESERTS / UNJUST DESERTS	24-25 / 52
PHTM EXPO	34-39
POLICING PEDICABS	30
ROUND THE COUNCILS	40-43
SHAME SHAME	58-59
TERROR TIMES	64-65
TRAINING TALK	14
UBER UPDATE	56
UNSUNG HEROES	10-11
WORLDWIDE TAXI FOCUS	76-77

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NAVIGATING CHAOS: THE POWER OF STRATEGY IN THE PRIVATE HIRE INDUSTRY

Article by Conor Nolan
Boira Consultants
www.boira-consulting.co.uk



Private hire is one of the most fascinating industries to work with. Where else would you find a business having to juggle two competing customers, with unique wants and needs from each other? Passengers wanting fast reliable service for as little as possible, drivers seeking as much freedom as possible for as much as possible, the operator stuck in the middle.

I often reflect on how much simpler the industry must have been when bookings were dispatched by radio, and the status quo was well established and seemingly concrete. I would argue that those times brought more certainty, but nothing remains stationary.

That was then; this is now. Times are changing; customer demands for both drivers and passengers are ever shifting and the number of plates an operator has to spin at any given time appears to be multiplying. Most operators we speak to agree that these are challenging times, chaotic even. Uncertainty with the economy, pressures from competitors, regulatory changes and employment matters only add to the complexities.

There is a product/industry lifecycle whereby the stages of an industry are influenced by supply and demand, amongst a host of other practical factors over time that illustrate the general trend for industry and products alike. These stages are: creation of a new industry/service/product, growth, maturation, decline.

An example of each stage can be outlined as follows:

Creation of new industry/service/product

When Uber entered the UK market in 2012, it brought a new product to an established industry that was comparatively inert. By offering the ride-hailing application to passengers and drivers, Uber not only disrupted the status quo of the industry, but created a whole new sub-industry that ultimately became the norm overtime.

Growth

Between Uber's international brand, convenient application and marketing strategy, Uber grew its market share, rapidly leveraging its business model and a lack of direct competition. This caused an eventual decline in the number of operators, particularly in London.

Maturation

An industry matures when the initial service provider and any close followers who enjoyed the lion's share of the market in their sector while the rest of the industry works to catch up, evolve their business model, sell out, or fail. The overall level of demand tapers off over time by the availability of numerous businesses offering a service, this often leads to pricing wars that ultimately benefit the consumer.

Think of how many ride hailing applications are now competing in the UK's largest cities such as London.

Decline

I prefer the term consolidation to decline. Here the price wars mean only the fittest survive and cause other businesses to seek to evolve their service offering (thus restarting the lifecycle) or businesses purchase one another. Then over time, it is difficult to estimate for how long, the lifecycle will renew again.

WHERE THE PRIVATE HIRE INDUSTRY STANDS

Well then, where does the private hire industry stand in the industry lifecycle?

In my opinion, the private hire industry finds itself consolidating. It is difficult to tell from the number of licences private hire operators in England reported by the Department of Transport, whether the number of independent firms is reducing. Personally, I am aware that this is becoming all too common. Acquisitions are the name of the game in the present market.

There are a number of larger firms acquiring other firms across the length and breadth of the country. This is to be expected, as the overall number of competitors decreases, the ability to create a profitable service increases, at least in theory.

STRENGTH IN STRATEGY



80-car fleets purchase 25-car fleets, 150-car fleets purchase 80-car fleets, super fleets purchase large fleets. This is the industry we are living in.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME?

How you react to the “new normal” (covid flashbacks aside), is entirely up to you. Sun Tzu is quoted as saying *“In the midst of chaos, there is also opportunity.”* I’m inclined to agree, for those who understand their place in their market and how to capitalise on the chaos.

Who will you be in this market? The hunter? The prey? Or the person who sees clear ground to grow away from the hunters and their prey?

This is largely up to you and how you face the reality that you’re in. I will never forget being told by a relatively small operator that they would take down Uber - a noble cause, but utterly unrealistic.

There are many out there that advocate for businesses and entrepreneurs alike to shoot for the stars so you can still land on the moon if you fall short. That may work for a select few, but that will not help if you are not in the business of space exploration.

Your time and effort are better spent on the factors that you can influence, that can make a difference and can provide you with a competitive advantage. Admittedly, this is not an easy task. It is often very difficult for us to objectively assess our situations when we are living them day to day. Imagine trying to understand the layout of a battlefield when you are stuck in the trenches, you probably can’t with any degree of accuracy.

Objective self-assessment is further complicated by our own assumptions and bias. We often over or underestimate our capabilities and our influence on external factors. This can cause overconfidence that can lead to stagnation or decline, rather than growth.

Finding a way to have a long hard look in the mirror will go a long way to understanding where you stand and your available options. This applies not only to those who are unsure where they stand, but I implore those on the acquisition trail to undertake a similar exercise.

Strategy can be the difference between success and failure. When I say strategy, I don’t refer to goals or values; I refer to actionable challenges we face that we can address to change our reality.

BENEFITS OF STRATEGY

There are a number of benefits that a clear well-defined strategy can provide:

- **Clarity of purpose:** When everyone in your business knows what the business is trying to accomplish, the business as a whole is likely to reap the rewards of coherent actions.
- **Discipline:** Your business will not only know what to do, but what not to do. Doing nothing is a decision.
- **Focus:** By combining the above points, your business can benefit from increased focus. Leveraging its resources where it matters rather than throwing mud at a wall in a feeble attempt to see what sticks.

If good strategy was easy, everyone would be succeeding. It takes time and effort to devise a good strategy and discipline to see it through. I have only touched the tip of the iceberg here, but wanted to focus the mind of the reader, strategy is how you react to chaos.

Strategy can seem like a buzzword; I know it did to me for a long time. But it can be your greatest weapon.

What you do next is up to you.

If you have any questions about strategy formulation or workshops, reach out to us at conor@boira-consulting.co.uk

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UNsung HEROES

HERO CHORLEY CABBIE PULLED MAN OUT OF BURNING CAR BEFORE CONTINUING WITH HIS FARE

Chorley cabbie, Abdul Javeed, has been hailed as a hero, after he pulled a man out of a burning car - before getting on with his fare.

Abdul spotted the wreckage of a car in Spendmore Lane, Coppull, as he was taking a customer home to Liverpool at 3am on 2 March. The car had left the road, smashed into two houses, and flames were beginning to take hold.

With other bystanders taking pictures at the scene and with no emergency services around, he stopped his taxi and ran towards the damaged car as it burst into flames.

Abdul said: "I went over to the car and saw a person unconscious inside. I managed to open the door, take the the seat belt off, and



got the man out of the car.

He added: "It was terrifying. I have never encountered anything like it. "After the arrival of the police and firefighters at the scene, I offered my support to the police by aiding them in evacuating residents from their homes in the event of a fire." "He's saved the man's life", said Shaz Malik, founder of the Chorley Taxi Association, who says that the

act of courage showcases the importance of having trained and responsible taxi drivers in the community.

Shaz said: "Javeed's story serves as a reminder of the vital role that CTA taxi drivers play in our communities, not only as transportation providers but also as first responders in times of crisis.

"His actions exemplify the values of compassion, quick thinking, and selflessness that are essential in emergency situations."

Shaz added: "Saving anyone's life is one of the biggest things you will do in your life, and every life matters. His bravery and quick actions undoubtedly saved a life and inspired others to do the same in times of crisis."

BASILDON TAXI DRIVER RALPH MORGAN TO BE HONOURED WITH BLUE PLAQUE

A cabbie who spent years campaigning for the rights of his colleagues has been honoured with a blue plaque at the taxi rank where he used to work.

Ralph Morgan was a well-known taxi driver from Basildon and spokesman for the Basildon Hackey Carriage Drivers' Association (BBHCA).

Mr Morgan, who colleagues say "would do anything for his customers" sadly passed away aged 74 in 2017. His fellow cabbies banded together to fund a blue plaque in his honour, to install at the rank in Basildon town centre.

The plaque was officially unveiled by the Basildon Heritage Society

on 16 March.

Former colleague Mark Waller and, BBHCA treasurer, paid tribute to his "community-spirited" friend.

He said: "He was nicknamed 'Mr Echo' because he was always in the paper, campaigning about local issues.

"Ralph was more than just a taxi driver. He would do anything to look after his customers. He was a man of the people."

It is hoped that by installing the plaque at the taxi rank, it will trigger passengers' memories "of a



good guy".

Basildon councillor Daniel Lawrence, chairman of the taxi licensing committee, is credited with the idea to install a blue plaque in Mr Morgan's memory and attended the unveiling.

The father-of-four was born in 1943 and worked "seven days a week", right up until he died following a short illness in July 2017.

He is survived by his wife, children and three grandchildren. At Mr Morgan's funeral, a huge parade of taxis followed the procession, as cabbies wanted to pay tribute to their friend and hard-working representative. Mrs Morgan described it as an "amazing" tribute.

UNSUNG HEROES

BIG-HEARTED **AYR** CABBIE PRAISED AFTER SURPRISING SEN CHILD AT HIS BIRTHDAY PARTY

A big-hearted taxi driver has been praised for surprising a young boy with additional support needs at his birthday party.

Ayr cabbie, Eddie, made young Elliott Van Rensburg's big day even more amazing as he celebrated his eighth birthday.

Elliott was enjoying a birthday bash at Pirate Pete's on Sunday, March 17. But he was absolutely delighted when best pal Eddie, who works for town firm Citadel Taxis, turned up. Eddie has built a special bond with Elliott as he takes him to and from Southcraig School – a specialist Additional Support Needs school in Ayr.

Elliott is picked up in the morning by Eddie and assistant Lynda who both brighten up his morning. And when they turned up to Elliott's big



day they put a huge smile on the youngster's face.

Elliott's dad Brandon said: "Elliott absolutely loves his wee trip to school in the morning, it's one of the highlights of his day. Eddie and Lynda are absolutely brilliant, they go out of their way for him and are his friends. Elliott is limited verbally

but he's learned to say Eddie because he likes him so much.

"I mentioned to them that it was Elliott's party on Sunday and they should come along. I never expected them to actually turn up, it was such a big surprise.

"Elliott was absolutely buzzing to see them. They brought him a spider-man figure which is so nice because they know what he is into. He spent all the party with them and they stayed the whole time."

Eddie has been picking up Elliott since August and Brandon has said what a huge support he and Lynda both are, as he thanked Citadel Taxis for their amazing work.

Brandon added: "Citadel Taxis have been brilliant for us and guys like Eddie really help families like us. We can't thank them enough."

POOLE ELVIS TRIBUTE SINGER RAISES MONEY FOR **COMIC RELIEF** BY PERFORMING IN HIS TAXI

An Elvis Presley tribute singer has raised money for Comic Relief by performing for passengers in his taxi. Tony Mclennan from Poole, known to his fans as Tony Tupelo, dressed up and sang Elvis's songs to his customers from Monday, March 11, to Friday, March 15.

He drives an independent cab for Ferndown Cars.

Tony also donned handmade Elvis Presley costumes, including his famous sideburns and jumpsuit and wore a red nose.

Tony said: "I grew up in a children's home, so raising money for children who are living in poverty is a cause really close to my heart. I



thought this would be a good way to give back and raise some money for underprivileged children."

Tony has been an Elvis Presley

impersonator for one year and is now entering big competitions around the country.

His passion for Elvis impersonation began after he performed karaoke with friends. He later watched the ETA European championships.

Tony then decided to give it a go. He said: "After my first competition, I absolutely fell in love with it. I am a big fan of Elvis, and I have been since I was a child."

Tony added: "I can't wait to go around saying, 'Thank you very much to everyone'. I just want to make people happy. If they want a song or a picture, they can put a donation into the charity box."

SPECIALIST TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS

TRANSFORMING PATIENT AND SCHOOL TRANSPORT: THE HATS AND CORDIC PARTNERSHIP



In the world of patient transport, efficiency, reliability and compassionate care are essential components. This is where HATS shines.

As the leading non-emergency patient transport service (NEPTS) and escorted school run transport provider in the UK, HATS facilitates over 2,000,000 passenger movements annually, catering to a diverse customer base that includes the NHS, clinical commissioning groups, mental health trusts, local authorities, and many public and private medical institutions.

Impressively, HATS serves a substantial portion of London, covering 88% of its boroughs. With a fleet of over 800 vehicles and 12 strategically located depots across the UK, HATS is well equipped to meet the transportation needs of its passengers. Additionally, boasting over 600 passenger assistants nationwide, this number continues to grow, HATS demonstrates its continued commitment to providing excellent service and support, striving to enhance the passenger experience.

HATS has built its reputation on delivering exceptional service and ensuring the wellbeing of its passengers; whether it's transporting individuals to medical appointments, providing private hire services, or catering to the needs of SEND schools, HATS prioritises safety and comfort above all else. This dedication to excellence extends to every aspect of its operations, including its choice of technology partners.

Recognising the need for a reliable and efficient dispatch system, tailored to its specialised requirements, HATS turned to Cordic, a leader in dispatch technology with over 20 years' industry experience. What sets Cordic apart is the specialisation in its passenger assistant solution, a scheduling and

automation module specifically designed for patient transport and school runs. This feature aligns perfectly with HATS commitment to providing specialist care and assistance to its passengers.

Additionally, HATS was impressed with Cordic's aggressive and innovative development road map for 2024/25, together with the ability to manage large-scale multi-site, multi-fleet operations and the capability to make an implementation with complexity a possibility.

Cordic's dispatch system offers a comprehensive suite of tools designed to streamline operations and enhance the passenger experience. With features tailored to patient and school run transport, such as automation tools and sophisticated scheduling software, HATS can ensure timely and safe transportation for all passengers. Moreover, Cordic's user-friendly interface empowers operators, drivers and passengers alike, making the journey smoother and more enjoyable for everyone involved.

By partnering with Cordic, HATS is taking a significant step forward in its mission to deliver high quality patient and school run transport services. With Cordic's specialist passenger assistant solution, HATS can provide greater support to passengers with unique needs, including those requiring medical assistance or attending specialised schools. This feature will not only improve the level of service that HATS can offer but also demonstrates its commitment to meeting the diverse needs of its passengers.

The HATS project represents a significant step forward in the evolution of the patient transport services. By leveraging the expertise of Cordic and adopting cutting-edge technology, HATS is poised to deliver even greater value to its customers and ensure the wellbeing of all passengers.

As they continue to innovate and improve, HATS and Cordic are paving the way for a brighter future in patient and specialist school transport.

New Partnership Announcement

**Cordic are delighted to
announce our partnership
with HATS**



Cordic are thrilled to partner with HATS, the UK's premier patient transport group, facilitating over 2,000,000 passenger movements annually, including healthcare transport, private hire, and services for SEND schools.

"At Cordic, we're excited about integrating our innovative and reliable dispatch system alongside our specialist passenger assistant module to efficiently manage the HATS 2,000,000 annual passenger movements. This partnership signifies our commitment to enhancing the passenger experience by providing seamless transportation dispatch solutions."

Idris Davies, CEO, Cordic



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TRAINING TALK

NORFOLK POLICE TRAIN TAXI DRIVERS ON SPOTTING DRUG CRIMES

Norfolk Constabulary has been working with taxi companies on how to spot drug dealers and report suspicious behaviour to avoid cabs being used in county line drug deals.

News of the link-up came as police revealed details on a major

operation across the county where twelve people were arrested and two county line phone lines shut down during a national intensification week between March 4 - 10. Arrests and seizures of drugs, weapons and cash were made, offences included possession with

intent to supply Class A & B drugs. Other work during the week of activity included working with taxi companies to ensure they know what to look for and how to report suspicious behaviour as taxis are sometimes used by dealers to move around the county.

STANSTED AIRPORT CABBIES EDUCATED ON SIGNS OF COUNTY LINES AND CHILD EXPLOITATION

A police operation to crack down on child exploitation saw Essex officers hand out information to more than 200 taxi drivers and passengers at Stansted Airport.

Safeguarding officers from Operation Raptor descended on the airport on 18 March 18. They stopped 178 taxis and handed out advice leaflets.

They gave out QR codes from the

Children's Society's Look Closer campaign containing information about exploitation and telling people what to do if they spot someone who concerns them.

The work at Stansted was the latest deployment of Operation Bumble, which began in October 2022 to highlight the signs of child exploitation.

Det Sgt Mark Ghosh, who co-

ordinates Bumble, said: "The main intention was to educate drivers about county lines. They need to be aware that children using taxis could be victims of exploitation.

"Previously, they told us they lacked knowledge and confidence about who to report to. The positive sign is that now, drivers are keeping information in their cars and know the signs to look for."

WORCESTER CABBIES GIVEN TRAINING TO SPOT VICTIMS OF ABUSE

Worcester's taxi drivers will be given training to help them identify the victims of CSE.

Licensed drivers are seen as being in an ideal position to spot and safeguard at-risk children, as well as vulnerable adults and victims of domestic violence.

Now the city council wants to introduce mandatory safeguarding training for all cabbies as part of the process of renewing their licence. Training schemes have previously been offered to drivers on a voluntary basis, but

licensing officers say this has created an "uneven playing field". In a report put before Worcester City Council's licensing committee on 4 March, taxi drivers are described as the "critical eyes and ears of the community" who "often encounter vulnerable people".

"In respect of CSE, appropriately trained licensed drivers can assist in identification of incidents and persons of concern," the report says."

The committee agreed to a 12-week consultation period, with a

view to implementing the scheme from January 1, 2025.

Councillors heard that there will be a cost to drivers but that officers are trying to keep this to a minimum, with the cost of the course likely to be around £20.

Niall McMenamin, the city council's principal officer licensing, told the committee: "This is about the driver being able to identify the people in the back of their vehicle, and them knowing the signs, where to report, and what to do at the time, if appropriate."

New Partnership Announcement



**HATS are thrilled to
announce our alliance
with Cordic**

Utilising Cordic's powerful dispatch system and specialised passenger assistant solution, we are set to redefine our customers journey experience.

"We are thrilled to announce our partnership with Cordic as our chosen software dispatch provider. As the UK's premier private patient transport group, the HATS Group facilitate over 2,000,000 passenger movements annually, selecting Cordic with their specialised passenger assistant solution stood out as the trusted choice for us. Their commitment to reliability and expertise aligns perfectly with our mission to deliver exceptional service to our passengers".

Alex Howard,
Head of Operations, HATS Group



FIT AND PROPER

OPERATOR AND DRIVER HAVE LICENCES REVOKED AFTER LICHFIELD COUNCIL INVESTIGATION

Lichfield DC has revoked a taxi operator's licence in the "interests of public safety" – the taxi operator and driver are both subject to a separate criminal investigation by licensing officers.

The authority's Regulatory and Licensing Sub-Committee heard on March 7 that a local care home contacted the operator on January 11 and booked a taxi to take a vulnerable person and their carer to a supermarket.

The operator was already under

investigation, and licensing officers headed to the supermarket after a tip-off. They found the operator had given the job to an unlicensed driver and officers suspended the operator's licence the same day.

The sub-committee determined that the operator, who had been called to the hearing, was "not a fit and proper person" to hold the licence. They noted that their 'paramount consideration' was the protection of the public, and that the same should have been true

for the operator.

Instead, the sub-committee found he had 'put profit before public safety' and, by not keeping accurate records, thought that he would 'get away with it'.

The operator also held his own combined hackney carriage and private hire vehicle drivers' licence, which the sub-committee revoked and his details will be added to a national register to prevent him from being granted a licence elsewhere.

TELFORD PHV DRIVER WHO TOOK UNBOOKED FARE FROM UNDERCOVER POLICE TO PAY OVER £3,000

A PH driver caught accepting an unbooked fare from undercover police officers outside a nightclub has been prosecuted and ordered to pay more than £3,000.

Gurpreet Singh from Telford, was operating under a driver badge issued by Wolverhampton City Council (WCC), was found guilty on March 14 of plying for hire without valid insurance. It was brought to

light during a joint enforcement exercise on 27 November 2022, with Telford & Wrekin Council (T&WC) and West Mercia Police. Singh had accepted an unbooked fare and agreed to transport undercover officers, thus violating private hire regulations.

T&WC deputy leader and cabinet member for Enforcement, Cllr Richard Overton, said: "Operations

like this are just a small part of the work carried out by our Safer Telford teams as part of the council wider ambition to make Telford and Wrekin a safer place to live.

"Thanks to all partners involved for their efforts in bringing this case to justice."

Singh was fined £346, costs of £2,525 were awarded to the council and Singh must also pay a victim surcharge of £138.

He must pay the full £3,009 within 28 days, and eight penalty points were endorsed on his licence.

Cllr Craig Collingswood, Cabinet Member for Environment for WCC, said: "Wolverhampton Council is committed to supporting Telford & Wrekin Council with these enforcement exercises. Public safety is of paramount importance. "As a result of the court hearing, we will now be reviewing Mr Singh's driver's licence. As a result, his licence may be revoked."

UNLICENSED TORFAEN TAXI DRIVER TO PAY NEARLY £2,000

An unlicensed Torfaen taxi driver has been ordered to pay nearly £2,000. On 29 February, Kathryn Murphy from Cwmbran, pleaded guilty to driving a hackney carriage vehicle without a taxi driver's licence from June 2023.

Appearing at Cwmbran Magis-

trates' Court, Ms Murphy was fined £660 and ordered to pay the council's costs of £847.26, and a £264 victim surcharge amounting to a total of £1,771.26.

The prosecution followed an investigation by Torfaen Council's Licensing Team.

FIT AND PROPER

FOUR PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS FINED FOR UNLAWFULLY SOLICITING FARES AT HENLEY REGATTA

Four private hire drivers have been slapped with fines totalling over £6,000 for unlawfully soliciting fares at Henley Regatta.

Tahir Mahmood Awan, 53, from Maidenhead, admitted to illegally offering taxi services in Henley on June 30. Awan, who was not licensed by the South Oxfordshire DC, took the opportunity to transport another rider back to his hometown for cash.

Oxford Magistrates' Court considered his early guilty plea and personal means and fined him £310, along with a victim surcharge of £120 and costs of £1,100.

On the same day, Yassar

Mahmood, 39, also from Maidenhead, faced similar charges referring back to July 1.

Despite initially disputing the claims, Mr Mahmood also pleaded guilty in court and was ordered to pay a total of £1,358.

A third defendant, Haroon Qayyum, 39, from High Wycombe, was convicted on February 23 in his absence.

The court heard Mr Qayyum had instructed a "passenger" to pretend they had pre-booked his service, unaware the "passenger" was a South Oxfordshire licensing officer. Mr Qayyum was subsequently fined £660, with a victim surcharge

of £264 and costs of £1,100.

Mohammed Siddeeqe, 46, from Reading, also admitted to illicit operation and was given a conditional discharge for 12 months and £1,126 in costs.

In court, Mr Siddeeqe said: "I had a clean driving licence and held licences with TfL, and both Reading and Fareham councils and had never had problems previously."

Leader of South Oxfordshire DC stated: "We take the safety of our residents very seriously and our officers work hard to make sure unlicensed taxis are stopped from operating in our district."

FINE & POINTS FOR CO DURHAM PH BOSS WHO USED UNLICENSED DRIVER FOR WHEELCHAIR TRANSPORT

A taxi boss allowed a wheelchair user to be regularly transported by an unlicensed driver.

Andrew Michael Bird, 53, has been slapped with eight driving licence penalty points and ordered to pay £2,183 after being prosecuted by Durham County Council (DCC) at Peterlee Magistrates' Court.

The court heard that council officers were carrying out an operation last July when they saw a minibus arrive at the Pathways Centre in Pity Me, Durham.

They watched the passenger, a wheelchair user, exiting the vehicle and being taken into the centre by the driver and a passenger assistant. The minibus had Birds Taxis branding on it and was plated as a private hire vehicle.

Checks were carried out on the

vehicle, including of the straps holding the wheelchair in place, and the driver and passenger assistant were asked for their driver licence badge and authorisation badge respectively.

Magistrates were told neither had badges with them, with the passenger assistant having forgotten hers. The driver said he didn't have a licence from DCC.

The court was told that Bird has held a private hire operator licence since around 2001 and holds a number of contracts with DCC to transport children and vulnerable adults to either school or work.

As a PH operator, Bird is required to keep detailed booking records. However magistrates heard the booking records he produced had little of the information required.

The court heard Bird had allowed the wheelchair user to be driven by the unlicensed driver on an almost daily basis for over six months. That driver had not taken the knowledge tests set by DCC and there'd been no DBS or medical check.

Magistrates heard there was no insurance in place as the defendant was allowing an unlicensed driver to drive a licensed vehicle.

Bird, from Shildon, pleaded guilty to three charges and was fined £1,320, ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £528 and costs of £335, and given the driving licence points.

Ian Harrison, the council's business compliance manager, said: "Mr Bird had no way of knowing if the driver was a fit and proper person potentially putting the passenger at risk."

CARD PAYMENTS

CARDIFF CABBIES TO TAKE CARD PAYMENTS FROM SEPTEMBER DESPITE MAJORITY VOTING AGAINST

Black and white cabs in Cardiff will now be required to take card payments as well as cash from 1 September.

Cardiff Council's public protection committee met to discuss the proposal at a meeting on Wednesday, March 13, with one member saying the update to the council's policy was "long overdue". However, some councillors said that the updated policy suggested that hackney carriage drivers could only go to work if they had a working method of taking card payments, raising concerns that drivers with technical faults would be penalised.

The committee eventually agreed to the proposal, which will come into effect from September 1, despite attempts by two members to amend it.

Cardiff Council carried out a survey which asked members of the public and taxi drivers what they thought of the proposal.

Of the 252 taxi driver respondents, 42% thought there should not be a requirement to accept card payments; 33% thought there should; and 24% were unsure.

Of the 700 public respondents, 84% thought there should be a requirement to accept card payments.

Cllr Marc Palmer said the results show that "this is something that is needed and I think the way that people live their lives now... we need that contactless method."

His committee colleague, Cllr Sean Driscoll, said: "I am no fan of a cashless society, but... people who use taxis are clearly in favour of it and it gives people a choice.



"We are a capital city and we need to move with the times."

In the report put to committee members, it shows that one of the conditions considered in a 2022 report on card payments suggested that drivers must notify the council if there is a fault with their card payment system and that they should arrange a repair or replacement within 48 hours.

However, on review of the proposed conditions, the council stated: "The requirement to notify the Licensing Department within 48 hours of a fault may cause confusion as it is a requirement that the device is operational at all times."

Cllr Helen Gunter proposed an amendment, seconded by Cllr Jon Shimmin, that drivers would be required to notify the council within seven days if their card readers had a technical fault and that they should still be allowed to work during this time.

Cllr Gunter said she was "broadly in favour of the policy" but said the amendment was put forward to negate the risk of drivers losing out on business if they hadn't got a working card machine.

Cllr Shimmin pointed out that whilst some card readers could be fixed or replaced in a matter of days, people could be waiting up to five days for a replacement purchased online.

He added: "[With] other businesses you don't say to them 'your card reader isn't

working, you have to stay at home'. It isn't fair to say that to taxi drivers."

Licensing team manager at Cardiff Council, Dan Cook, said the new requirement would reduce the need for customers to be dropped off next to cash points and improve their safety in such circumstances if this was at night time.

He also said: "As fewer and fewer customers are carrying wallets and cards... we have received comments that customers preferred to use private hire vehicles."

He also said there were a number of card readers on the market that had fail safes built into them, like the ability for people to use smart phones as card readers and an option for customers to be sent a text message to facilitate a payment through their phones.

On the proposed amendment, Mr Cook added that it would be "very difficult" to enforce a condition to report a technical failure with a card reader and correct it within a set time frame.

He said it would be "unenforceable" if the condition was set to seven days.

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FOUR NEIGHBOURING COUNCILS JOIN FORCES IN AGREEMENT TO SAFEGUARD PUBLIC SAFETY

Four neighbouring authorities have joined forces in a partnership agreement to safeguard public safety. Telford & Wrekin, Shropshire, City of Wolverhampton, and South Staffordshire Councils have all signed a partnership statement that aims to bring a consistent approach to taxi safety across neighbouring authorities.

Deputy Leader Telford & Wrekin council, Cllr Richard Overton said: "We're pleased to lead this partnership and foster a united approach to taxi safety.

"Taxi services operate across council borders, so collaboration and communication are key tools. This agreement will ensure we continue working in a consistent way to protect residents and that

all licensed taxi drivers and operators comply with the law."

Key objectives of this partnership include enforcing rules and regulations uniformly and ensuring the safety of licensed drivers and their vehicles.

Cllr Overton added: "Through collaborative efforts, sharing of information, and joint cross-border enforcement exercises, we are determined to enhance safety measures across neighbouring authorities.

"This statement shows our continued commitment to joint working to ensure that our passengers feel safe and have confidence in the taxi trade. This commitment continues to put public safety at the heart of

decision making and enforcement." Leader of South Staffordshire Council, Cllr Roger Lees BEM, said: "This partnership agreement demonstrates the priority of taxi safety across the authorities, and our commitment to continue to work together in a consistent manner to protect our residents." Cllr Chris Schofield, Shropshire Council's Cabinet member for Planning and Regulatory Services said: "Shropshire Council is fully committed to this partnership agreement, which we believe will strengthen the approach to taxi safety across our respective boundaries and enhance the work that each local authority has already been doing individually and collectively."



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IN THE NEWS

VEEZU EXTENDS REACH FURTHER SOUTH WITH ACQUISITION OF AQUA CARS IN PORTSMOUTH

Veezu, the UK's biggest and fastest-growing private hire firm, is extending its reach further south with the acquisition of Aqua Cars in Portsmouth.

The acquisition opens new horizons for Aqua, promising an elevated private hire experience for its driver-partners and their passengers.

Launched in 2013, Veezu invests heavily in data, technology, and infrastructure to ensure that hyperlocal private hire operators, such as Aqua Cars, remains part of their community, without compromising the passenger experience.

Aqua Cars' head office in Portsmouth will become part of the Veezu Group, alongside Bridge



Cars in Gosport and Andi Cars in Havant.

Ronnie Leng, Co-Owner of Aqua Cars, said: "Joining forces with Veezu is a natural next step for us to further support our local community by improving the passenger experience.

"The implementation of new technologies will ensure a more

reliable, safe, and easy service for passengers and will aid more than 600 drivers with whom we partner across the region."

Arnie Singh Chief Operations Officer of Veezu, said: "We're so pleased to welcome the whole Aqua team to Veezu.

"Their reputation for excellence proceeds them and is one we will maintain throughout the partnership.

"As our first acquisition of 2024, following a number of successful acquisitions last year including Britannia Taxis in Merseyside, it highlights that our growth strategy continues.

"We're thrilled to expand further south and develop our strong network of areas across the UK."

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DFT ANNOUNCES LATEST PLAN FOR DRIVERS MEASURES AND LOCAL ELECTRIC VEHICLE FUNDING

Plan for Drivers measures

The Department for Transport has published the latest raft of measures from its Plan for Drivers, which will see motorists benefit from smoother journeys and reduced congestion, with local people getting a stronger voice on road schemes that affect them.

As part of its 30-point plan, the latest measures include:

- Draft guidance for councils on Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs), setting out that they must gain buy-in from local residents, businesses and emergency services when considering implementing new LTN schemes, alongside the government review of LTNs
- Strengthened guidance on setting 20mph speed limits, reminding them to reserve them for sensible and appropriate areas only



Department for Transport

- Traffic light upgrades across the country thanks to £50m - £30m to replace outdated equipment, and £20m to reduce poor traffic light sequencing through innovative technology that responds to live traffic conditions.
- The launch of a consultation seeking views from residents on how local councils enforce traffic measures
- New guidance around bus lanes and street works, and research from the Department's noise camera trials

For more information, and to read the full press notice, please follow this link: <https://shorturl.at/gpHOY>

Local Electric Vehicle (LEVI) Fund

The Government continues to deliver its £381m Local Electric Vehicle (LEVI) Fund to councils, who can choose where is best to install chargepoints in their local area.

Following the approval of the first five local authority applications in February, payments to 46 additional councils from Torbay to Tees Valley have now been approved, worth over £187m.

Additionally, the local authorities allocated to the second round of LEVI funding will be able to apply to the fund from 2 April in a further boost to the chargepoint rollout.

Alongside, the fund the Department has announced:

- Further support for EV drivers by ensuring households without driveways or dedicated parking spaces can access the Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Grant. The £350 grant will be widened to those who own or rent and have access to adequate street parking
- Help to support councils deliver EV infrastructure with the Government-funded electric vehicle infrastructure training course launching in full this week
- The launch of the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Forum, chaired by Minister Browne and AA President, Edmund King, to discuss how best to tackle barriers and accelerate the delivery of charging infrastructure.

SPRING BUDGET ANNOUNCEMENT: VAT TREATMENT OF PHVs

The Government has committed to a consultation on the impacts of the July 2023 High Court ruling in *Uber Britannia Ltd v Sefton MBC*.

In the Spring Budget, the government said: "The government will launch a consultation on the impacts of the July 2023 High Court ruling in *Uber Britannia Ltd v Sefton MBC* in April.

"The government is committed to exploring a range of viable options



to ensure that this court ruling does not have any undue adverse effects on the private hire vehicle sector and its passengers."

Do not miss our VAT Seminar taking place at the PHTM EXPO on Wednesday 15 May at 1pm.

For more information, follow this link: <https://shorturl.at/dvDH4>

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FALKIRK MAN WHO RACIALLY ABUSED CABBIE GIVEN **SIX-MONTH** DEFERRED SENTENCE

An offender bombarded a taxi driver with derogatory taunts and abuse and then told police the man had played the “racist card”.

Andrew Perrow, 61, appeared at Falkirk Sheriff Court on 7 March, having admitted engaging in a course of behaviour that was threatening and uttering offensive remarks in Callendar Road, Falkirk on August 5 last year.

Amy Sneddon, procurator fiscal depute, said: “The complainer, a taxi driver, picked up the accused, who said he was driving the wrong way. The driver said it was the quickest route and the accused

swore at him.

“The driver tried to calm the accused down, saying he would take a different route if required. He stopped the vehicle and pressed his emergency button which alerted the taxi office.

“He then got out of his vehicle and locked the accused inside. The accused was then asked to get out of the taxi and he began shouting and swearing.”

Perrow hurled racist abuse at the driver, at one stage calling him the ‘n’ word.

When police talked to him he told them the driver had “called the

racist card” into play and stated “they are getting away with this all the time”.

Defence solicitor John Mulholland said Perrow “regretted his conduct” and that he suffered from short term memory loss at times – a condition not helped by his alcohol consumption.

Sheriff Christopher Shead said Perrow’s behaviour was “utterly unacceptable”, but noted there was a “complicated background” to the case.

He placed Perrow, from Bainsford on a structured deferred sentence for six months to September 5.

MORAY MAN WHO SPAT IN CABBIE’S FACE TO PAY **COMPENSATION** & 12-MONTH SUPERVISION ORDER

A man who spat in the face of a taxi driver after becoming aggressive at the end of a night out has been ordered to pay £250 in compensation.

On July 22 last year, a taxi driver stopped to pick up a man and a woman outside a hotel on Low Street in Buckie at around 10.30pm.

The man, later identified as Ricki Thain, 22, from Portgordon, got into the taxi alongside the woman but the driver could not understand what he was saying. Procurator fiscal Karen Poke told the court that it was at this stage that Thain started to get loud and aggressive.

The taxi driver pulled over but Thain demanded that she take him home.

She told him to leave the taxi but Thain grabbed her by the t-shirt, scratching her neck in the process, before spitting directly in her face. He then proceeded to spit all over the taxi.

She told him that she would phone the police but he continued to shout and started to kick the outside of the taxi.

He attempted to regain access to the taxi by pulling at the door but the taxi driver pulled away so that she could contact the police.

But Thain was still agitated when officers arrived. He screamed in the face of one officer and resisted arrest, kicking his legs out in an attempt to break free.

And, upon being moved into the back of a police van, he again started to spit profusely.

Elgin Sheriff Court heard that a spit hood had to be applied en-route to the police station.

He then claimed after waking up the following morning that he had been “spiked”.

Defence solicitor Grant Daghish told the court that Thain had been out with friends drinking on the night in question.

However, he has little memory of what happened but has since apologised in person to the officers who arrested him and is hopeful of doing the same for the taxi driver.

Sheriff David Sutherland ordered Thain to carry out 100 hours of unpaid work. He also imposed a 12-month supervision order and ordered him to pay the taxi driver £250 in compensation.

JUST DESERTS

JAIL FOR COUPLE WHO ATTACKED WAKEFIELD CABBIE WHEN HE RECOGNISED THEM AS FARE DODGERS

A couple who attacked a cabbie weeks after they ran from his cab without paying are now starting prison sentences.

Rose Jedynak and Ryan Padget were recognised by the driver and when he confronted them, Padget grabbed him and punched him, Leeds Crown Court was told.

The drug-addicted pair, who have a long history of public nuisance crimes including shoplifting, were both given criminal behaviour orders (CBO) as well as jail sentences.

Prosecuting, James Holding said that the pair had first been in the taxi on December 12 last year in Outwood, when they got out without paying the fare.

Jedynak then racially abused the driver, calling him a "p**** b***** mother f*****".

On December 31, Padget walked into the Tesco Express in Outwood, at around 10pm, and was instantly recognised by the member of staff as a known shoplifter. He barged the woman out of the way and picked up a £13 crate of beer before barging her out of the way again and walking out.



Finally, on January 4, the same taxi driver was called to pick the pair up. When he recognised them, he wanted money up front and the fare from the previous journey, but they turned violent.

Sat behind the driver, Padget put his arm around the driver's neck and squeezed while Jedynak tried to grab his phone. Padget also punched him to the face. It was only when the panicking driver's leg hit the car horn did Padget relent.

As they got out, 33-year-old Jedynak poured alcohol over the car seat. The driver was left in shock and had cuts to his ear.

Jedynak was later picked out of an ID parade, while 42-year-old Padget was recognised by officers. The pair were arrested and interviewed. Padget gave no

comments while Jedynak denied involvement, despite being told she had been positively identified. With both being held on remand since their arrest, they admitted a charge of making off without payment from December 12, and affray from January 4. Padget admitted a charge of robbery of the Tesco store.

The offences put them both in breach of a community order they received in September last year for "various thefts".

Padget, from Outwood, has 68 previous convictions for 151 offences, many for theft. Jedynak, from Wakefield has 12 previous convictions for 29 offences, mainly for thefts.

Judge Simon Batiste gave them both the CBO - Padget for five years, Jedynak for four - which bans them from entering certain shops.

For Padget, he said the robbery of Tesco was done with "breath-taking arrogance" and said the message "has to get out" that it will not be tolerated. He jailed him for a total of 30 months.

He jailed Jedynak for 12 months.

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8 YEARS' JAIL FOR MAN WHO CONDUCTED REVENGE CAMPAIGN AGAINST GOLDLINE TAXIS, SUFFOLK

Two men spent six years engaged in a vendetta against a taxi firm which saw cabs fired at with air guns, a court has heard.

Adrian Ling (pictured) launched the "revenge campaign" against Goldline Travel, along with Daniel Garrison, after being sacked by the firm in 2012.

Their trial heard that over the next seven years the firm's vehicles were repeatedly shot at while picking up and carrying fares. In other attacks, the pair slashed tyres, broke wing mirrors, and hurled corrosive substances over bodywork.

They carried out a total of 83 acts of criminal damage against the taxi and PHV firm's property between March 2013 and May 2019. Ling, 63, even used a radio scanner to monitor Goldline's communications systems in order to plan ambushes, in what the judge said was a "revenge campaign of Hollywood proportions".

Both men were found guilty of a string of offences at Ipswich Crown Court with Ling sentenced to eight years in prison. Garrison was bailed, awaiting pre-sentence reports.

Ling, from Beccles, started working at Goldline in 2008 as a mechanic, but was sacked by owner Ian Trussler in 2012 after being accused of stealing diesel - although his conviction for the offence was later overturned.

In a victim statement read out at court by prosecutor Andrew Thompson, Mr Trussler said: "I could never have imagined the destruction that Mr Ling would cause to my life when he left the company. The events of the past 12 years have left me at breaking



point and I feel like my life has been put on hold since 2012.

"The number and frequency of damage to company vehicles was relentless," he said.

Mr Trussler told the court he had to install a system to block Ling from intercepting the company's radio to prevent ambush attacks.

Mr Thompson told the court it was thought the vandalism had caused at least £250,000 of damage but this is disputed.

The court also heard from Claire Tillet, an office manager at Goldline who claimed Ling had followed her home and said she "felt on edge everyday".

Many of the cabs were attacked with shots fired from a passing car, shattering windows and denting bodywork, while they were picking up or carrying passengers, though none were injured. However, a driver was injured by a projectile when her car window was smashed.

The court was told metal cylinder projectiles were recovered inside vehicles or nearby after the attacks. Ling and Garrison were arrested after police analysed CCTV and ANPR footage, phone cell location and mobile phone data, as well as witness statements.

Officers found the pair bought vehicles and using cloned registration plates to avoid detection,

including a second hand red Ford Focus which Garrison registered under a false name and address.

A red Ford Focus was then captured on CCTV in the vicinity of several incidents of criminal

damage against vehicles, with a cloned registration plate. Crucially, Garrison had sent Ling a text with the cloned registration number prior to the incidents.

CCTV captured a red Ford Focus with cloned plates in April 2016, driving past a Goldline taxi, turn around, pass the cab again before a window suddenly shattered. The Focus then drove off at high speed. An off-duty police officer recognised Garrison driving a blue Ford Ka behind a Goldline taxi with a man crouched down in the back. Enquiries established the registration details had been cloned.

Eight days later a blue Ford Ka was caught on CCTV following an attack on another taxi in Beccles. Ling and Garrison were arrested. Passing sentence, Judge Martyn Levett told Ling he was "a vengeful person". The Judge ordered the destruction of Ling's air rifles and his radio scanner.

Ling and Garrison, 35, from Woodbridge, were found guilty of conspiring to commit criminal damage to property belonging to Goldline Travel between December 2012 and November 2019 and damaging company vehicles.

Ling was also convicted of four offences of having an air rifle with intent to commit criminal damage between 2013 and 2019.

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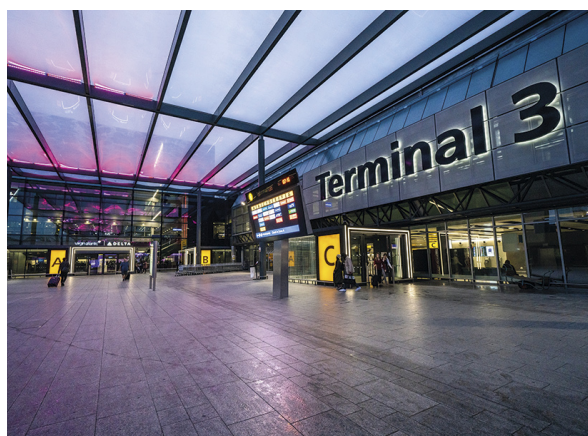
Heathrow Airport's Authorised Vehicle Area (AVA) is Heathrow's dedicated waiting area for all private hire vehicles and licensed taxi drivers to utilise before picking up from a Short Stay car park and meeting passengers at an agreed location within the terminals.

Open 24 hours through 365 days of the year, the AVA offers catering facilities (which are open from 06:00 to 22:00) including a hot meal and halal selection, indoor seating areas, toilets, multi-faith prayer room and waste bins.

Access to the AVA is conveniently provided off the Northern Perimeter Road, TW6 2EQ and is easily accessible from both the M4 and M25 as well as local roads.

How does the AVA work:

- Drive into the dedicated driver waiting area located at the AVA. This is located along the Northern Perimeter Road, with the post code: TW6 2EQ
- Whilst waiting for your passenger to arrive, there are facilities provided for drivers including catering, seating areas and a prayer room
- Once you have received confirmation that your passenger is ready to be picked up, pay for your ticket at the dedicated machines, which will be required to open the car park barrier to exit. No pre-booking is required, and payment can be made by cash, credit or debit cards.
- Costs for using the Authorised Vehicle Area are £1 an hour for the first five hours. Any further time is the same rate as Heathrow's Short Stay car parks.



- Drive to the correct Short Stay car park situated next to the terminal where your passenger will be arriving into and meet your passenger at an agreed location in the terminal

Ongoing patrols are being undertaken in conjunction with relevant local authorities to ensure drivers are not waiting on local roads and are making use of the AVA whilst waiting for passengers and to ensure dedicated facilities are being used in accordance with terms and conditions.

NOTE: Access is for authorised private hire and taxi operators and their vehicles only. A valid private hire / taxi operator's or driver's licence must be shown to members of staff or to the police on request.

The AVA is located on the Northern Perimeter Road, TW6 2EQ
For further information on the AVA including Frequently Asked Questions, please visit:
<https://www.heathrow.com/transport-and-directions/by-taxi-or-mini-cab/authorised-vehicle-area>

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POLICING PEDICABS

NEW RULES TO PUT THE BRAKES ON NUISANCE PEDICABS

Central London streets are set to be safer and calmer as new laws to end the blight of unlicensed pedicabs in London passed on 26 March.

The Pedicabs (London) Bill gives TfL powers to crack down on rogue pedicab drivers by regulating fares and improving safety standards – bringing the industry into line with other forms of transport in the capital.

The bill, which is set to receive royal assent in the coming weeks, aims to close a legal loophole that has meant the industry in London is not regulated, exposing some customers – including tourists – to eye-watering fares, dangerous driving and antisocial behaviour on the city's streets.

Through the new law, TfL will be able to decide when, where and how many pedicabs can operate to ensure they do not cause a hazard to pedestrians and other motorists. Drivers in breach of this legislation could face having their licence revoked, their pedicab confiscated or a fine of up to £2,500.

Roads and Local Transport Minister, Guy Opperman, said: "For too long, rogue pedicabs have taken advantage of the lack of rules around fares and licensing, so we're taking action to close that loophole.

"We know this issue has caused real concerns about the impact on safety and traffic, from clogging up bus lanes to blaring loud music, and this common-sense law will help to put businesses at ease and end the chaos in hotspots like Soho and Covent Garden."

The Pedicabs (London) Bill will



enable TfL to regulate London's pedicabs and protect passengers by:

- conferring powers on TfL to bring forward a licensing regime for pedicabs in a similar way to local authorities throughout the rest of England and Wales
- providing TfL with the ability to introduce fare control to combat overcharging on pedicab services and protect consumers from being ripped off
- allowing TfL to set standards for operators, drivers and their vehicles to improve the safety of pedicabs, as well as introducing insurance requirements and ensuring vehicles are roadworthy
- ensuring that pedicab drivers undergo criminal record and right to work checks before being allowed to carry passengers in the same way that drivers of taxis and private hire vehicles must do, allowing passengers to use pedicabs with confidence and cutting crime
- giving TfL powers to take steps to improve congestion and tackle

issues, such as highways obstruction. TfL will be able to restrict the presence of pedicabs in certain areas, at certain times. This will help improve road safety and traffic-related issues in central London

- enabling enforcement action against those operating without a licence or outside their licence conditions, including civil sanctions and criminal offences. Since being introduced, it has received widespread support in both Houses, as well as from businesses across London

Ros Morgan, Chief Executive of Heart of London Business Alliance, said: "We are delighted to see the Pedicabs Bill take its final steps towards becoming law today.

"Without regulation, pedicabs have been a menace to London. With regulation, they could prove to be a safe and environmental means of travel.

"We look forward to working with TfL, which will enforce the regulations, to ensure that the scheme works for the capital."

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Article by NexGen Outsource
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Q *Could you introduce NexGen Outsource and the services you provide for taxi firms throughout the UK?*

A NexGen Outsource is a pioneering inbound call centre dedicated to delivering top-notch call handling services for taxi businesses across the UK. From Scotland to the South Coast, we offer our expertise at an unbeatable rate of just £3.50 per hour. Our services encompass everything from straightforward A2B bookings to complex airport transfers and requests for specialised vehicles. Additionally, we offer skilled dispatchers who can manage driver allocations and respond to driver enquiries, ensuring seamless operations at all hours.

Q *What distinguishes your agents in the marketplace?*

A Our agents are extensively trained on a variety of dispatch systems, including Cordic, iCabbi, Autocab, Sherlock, Cab9, and Cab Treasure. They are fluent English speakers with neutral accents, ensuring clear and professional communication. Armed with their comprehensive training and expertise, our agents are well-prepared to handle a wide array of tasks with efficiency.

Q *How can taxi firms gain financially by partnering with NexGen Outsource?*

A By outsourcing your call handling to NexGen Outsource, taxi firms can achieve savings of over 70% on their wage bills. Our service negates the need for a large in-house team,



particularly for less sought-after shifts like the graveyard shift. With our dispatchers at the helm, business owners can sleep soundly, confident that their bookings are being dispatched with reliability.

Q *What does the setup process entail for new clients?*

A The setup process is straightforward and swift. Clients simply need to authorise their telecomms provider to liaise with our network team, Vale Communications, who will oversee the technical arrangements. In a matter of days, we can arrange for clients to interview potential agents. Once content, these agents will receive targeted training on the client's specific local area and can begin handling calls promptly.



CALL CENTRE SERVICES



Q *What makes NexGen Outsource a trustworthy option for taxi businesses?*

A NexGen Outsource takes pride in utilising secure VPN technology and a WatchGuard firewall to protect client data, along with quadruple layers of backup internet to ensure service continuity. We conduct checks equivalent to a basic DBS disclosure for all our in-house trained agents. Clients can expect a consistent supply of staff, with additional agents ready at short notice, even to cover for unexpected absences. Our operators are ready to manage all manner of calls, including those from account customers and complaints, while maintaining utmost professionalism.

Q *Is there flexibility in the types of shifts that can be outsourced?*

A Indeed. While many clients prefer to outsource the graveyard shift, we are adaptable and capable of covering any shift that our clients require. This flexibility ensures that taxi firms can maintain exceptional service levels throughout the day and night without the hassle of managing an internal 24/7 workforce.

Q *How can taxi companies begin working with NexGen Outsource?*

A Starting is as simple as signing up today. Taxi businesses are encouraged to get in

touch with us to initiate the setup process and take the first step towards a more streamlined, cost-effective call handling solution. With our skilled agents and robust technological infrastructure, NexGen Outsource is devoted to ensuring that every client enjoys the peace of mind that comes with reliable, professional call centre support.

To get started with NexGen Outsource and revolutionise your taxi business's call handling operations, simply reach out to us today. Our dedicated team is ready to assist you every step of the way, ensuring a seamless transition to our efficient and cost-effective services. Don't wait any longer – experience the benefits of NexGen Outsource and elevate your taxi business to new heights of success. There are no set-up costs involved whatsoever. We also offer a one-week free trial with no obligation. Giving you a thorough preview of our services before you make your decision.





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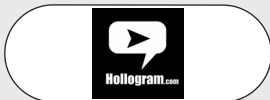
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ROUND THE COUNCILS

SEFTON:

FIVE-YEAR BAN FOR USING MOBILE

Cabbies in Sefton could lose their licence for five years if convicted of driving while using a mobile phone.

Under rules introduced at Sefton Council Licensing and Regulatory Committee on March 11, licensed drivers face new and updated sanctions as the local authority approved changes to the Licensed Driver Convictions Policy.

Three new offences were added to the policy and included guidance on what sanctions licensed drivers would face if they were convicted of using a hand held device while driving, convicted of discrimination, or convicted of exploitation.

For the offences of discrimination and exploitation, any driver convicted would have their licence permanently revoked and prevented from ever working as a taxi driver.

However, there was some debate around the clarity and justification for the new guidance on the offence of using a hand held device while driving.

The revised policy stipulated an immediate five-year ban would be imposed on licensed drivers if they were convicted of such an offence

Petitions were submitted by Frank West and Joseph Johnson, H&PH trade representatives on behalf of licensed taxi drivers and asked for a revision of the wording in the policy.

The trade reps wanted the policy to reflect the fact that taxi drivers rely on mobile phones to confirm, amend or cancel jobs through booking apps. They said an immediate five-year ban was unnecessarily harsh and unclear as some drivers may be punished for tapping their phone while managing booking apps.

The reps were clear a ban is understandable for drivers accepting calls with a phone in their hand.

Instead, the reps requested a change to the policy wording so drivers would go straight to mediation (were a ban would be considered) rather than an immediate ban.

Local authorities across the Liverpool City Region have been working to 'standardise conditions' in relation to the convictions policy and all changes have been passed by Wirral, Knowsley and Liverpool.

The committee considered the petitions but did not believe the reasons reached the threshold as laid out in Government policy. The committee also stated that there were caveats to the convictions policy that did include options for mediation.

The report by Sefton Council said: "The recommendations to be implemented unless there is a compelling local reason not to and there is a risk that the council could be open to challenge if the new statutory guidance is not followed without sufficient justification.

"Adhering to the new statutory guidance will mitigate against any challenge to the council's licensing regime."

PENDLE:

NEW VEHICLE SAFETY MEASURES

A total of 13 new measures have been voted through by borough councillors at the latest full meeting of Pendle Council to improve vehicle safety.

It comes after unannounced taxi safety checks in November and January found high failure rates with issues including worn tyres, brake problems, loose wheel nuts, loose batteries, faulty lights, seal belts and fluid leaks.

Taxi safety enforcement has been a source of debate, concern and disagreement between officials, councillors and the trade for some years.

Updated licensing powers including penalty points and licence reviews for taxi drivers or company owners responsible for breaches, ranging from spot-check failures to multiple vehicle breaches by taxi firms over a year, have been backed by councillors.

Drivers and company owners in some situations will have to appear before Pendle's Taxi Licensing Committee for licence reviews.

A mobile phone app is to be introduced for daily vehicle checks with penalties for those who do not use it.

There will also be penalties for people who lie or are 'untruthful' about taxi safety checks.

Another measure is to extend taxi knowledge tests to include a test on the basic mechanics of cars.

The taxi trade has opposed introducing an app and had disagreements over who its own representatives are.

Liberal Democrat councillor and deputy council leader, David Whipp, said the new report made "excellent suggestions".

Some councillors questioned where the resources would come from to deal with "a surge in cases".

Labour councillor, Mohammed Iqbal, also said there needed to be "transparency" with the taxi trade, when it comes to training and using an app.

ROUND THE COUNCILS

NEW FOREST: PROPOSED CHANGES TO POLICY

Proposed changes to New Forest District Council's taxi licensing policy will force drivers out of business, one cabbie has claimed. The district council is currently running a public consultation into the changes, which cover the application process, ages of vehicles used, DBS checks, and signage.

Taxi driver Philip Bristow from Ringwood, who operates a wheelchair accessible London cab, estimated it would "wipe out" 75% of taxis in the town area, due to the increased costs.

One planned change relates to the age of vehicles – all petrol and diesel cars must be less than five years old at the initial time of licensing. All hybrid vehicles must be less than seven.

Further changes would come into effect on 1st January 2026, when it's proposed that only vehicles less than ten years' old will have licences renewed. Fully electric vehicles would be exempt.

"If these new proposals are implemented it would require small operators like myself to invest not only in a new vehicle but a new disabled vehicle – which costs around £80,000," Philip explained.

"I wouldn't be able to carry on. You would never recoup that kind of money."

He pointed out that while all hackney carriages that are licensed must be wheelchair accessible, private hire vehicles are exempt from the requirement.

He added: "Ironically the small operators are the only ones currently operating WAVs – many of the larger firms don't have a suitable vehicle in their fleet.

"A direct result will be no disabled accessible vehicles operating in the area."

A report to NFDC outlining the changes said: "This is to ensure that NFDC does not have a policy favouring vehicles older than other neighbouring authorities [and] assists our clean air strategy and climate change targets in relation to emissions."

It will also "maintain" a professional fleet for local customers and visitors to the area.

"This is the first major review of our taxi policy for some years and will incorporate revised statutory guidance, together with increased checks on drivers to ensure their continued fitness and propriety," it continued.

If the new policy is approved, six-monthly DBS checks will be carried out instead of the current three-yearly ones.

A dress code could also be introduced to promote a "professional" image, which the council says is particularly important due to the area being a tourist destination, and card machines should be available to "ensure that travelling by taxi is easier and a more attractive option to customers".

The technology will also improve safety for drivers as they will carry less cash.

Self-adhesive identification signage to the rear passenger doors could also be introduced in order for passengers to identify vehicles more easily.

The consultation ends on 15th April and can be found here: <https://www.newforest.gov.uk/article/3478/Taxi-and-private-hire-policy-consultation>

WAKEFIELD: INCREASE IN VEHICLE AGE LIMITS

Councillors have voted in favour of increasing the age limit of vehicles operating in the Wakefield district. The permitted upper age limit of diesel and petrol vehicles registered with Wakefield Council has been increased from 10 to 12 years.

The authority's licensing committee also agreed to increase the limit for multi-seater and wheelchair access vehicles from 12 to 15 years.

Battery electric vehicles can operate up to 20 years old. An interim extension was agreed in September following pressure from driver groups calling for changes to ease financial pressures on cabbies.

The decision was made following a consultation between January and February this year.

A report said: "Responses were, overall, in favour of an increase to age limits, with a number of comments requesting limits beyond those proposed."

Out of 397 people who responded to a questionnaire, 72% were in favour of an increase to 12 years for diesel and petrol saloon vehicles. A total of 83% were in favour of increasing the age limit for wheelchair accessible and multi-seater vehicles to 15 years.

Some 77% agreed that hybrid vehicles should also be licensed for up to 15 years.

Last July, drivers demonstrated outside County Hall ahead of a full council meeting.

Members of Wakefield Drivers Association (WDA) called for the local authority to ease a number of restrictions similar to neighbouring local authorities. Councils in Leeds, Calderdale and Kirklees have all amended vehicle age policies in the past year.

ROUND THE COUNCILS

NEWPORT:

MORE CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS

Taxi drivers in Newport will face more criminal record checks under new rules designed to improve safety. Owners of taxi firms will also have to pass a “fit and proper test” and comply with Welsh rules on CCTV in vehicles if they are to continue trading in the city. The measures form part of Newport City Council’s updated policy for taxi and private hire vehicles. Drivers will have to provide the results of a DBS check every six months, either by signing up for an automatic update service or applying for their own checks. The council’s licensing team will have to carry out 3,000 checks each year, compared to the current 500 it performs annually.

A report noted this could “impact on [the] workload of the team” but will “enhance the authority’s ability to promote public safety”.

Taxi and PHV owners will be subject to annual DBS checks as well as the “fit and proper” requirements. Other planned policy reforms have been dropped or softened following a “well-attended” meeting with members of the trade last September.

Generally, the council will only grant new licences for vehicles which meet Euro 6 standards. However, wheelchair accessible taxis of Euro 4 standards will be accepted to maintain WAV numbers.

Taxi drivers were also successful in overturning a plan to legally require them to undertake a booking they had accepted “unless there is a good reason”.

The council said there had been increased reports of drivers cancelling jobs, “causing frustration and significant safeguarding concerns”. But the council accepted drivers’ “strong opposition” to the plan.

BRIDGEND:

INCREASING MOT GARAGES PROPOSAL

Discussions have taken place over the future of taxi MOT testing in Bridgend County Borough.

Currently testing in the area is undertaken at BCBC’s in-house vehicle maintenance garage, Ty Thomas. It works with local taxi companies which require an enhanced taxi compliance check on top of their standard MOT certificate.

The site is also shared with South Wales Police, and was said to have brought in £49,785 worth of income

from taxi fees in the last year. However, in November 2022, the licensing committee received a petition from the trade with 170 signatures, with the aim to open up taxi testing to other MOT garages.

It led to the management board at Ty Thomas discussing an “early exit” from the taxi testing agreement, though it was later confirmed that the existing arrangement would run until March 2025.

Officers said they would begin a feasibility study at the beginning of the next financial year to look at opening up taxi MOT testing in the area, with a number of options on the table including: allowing taxi companies to obtain a MOT Certificate from any MOT testing station; selecting an approved number of testing stations; or maintaining the current in-house arrangements as they stand.

WILTSHIRE:

RANKS SET FOR SHAKE UP IN REVIEW

Wiltshire Council will be carrying out a review of taxi ranks in major towns across the county to assess the accessibility of the sites.

This comes after recent government guidance placed an emphasis on accessible transport for the 13.9 million disabled people across the UK.

The new taxi and private hire vehicle licensing guidance states: “Disabled people are particularly reliant on taxi and private hire vehicle services, either because they may not have access to a private car, are unable to use public transport, or because the built environment is insufficiently accessible to meet their needs.

“This can mean that the availability of an accessible, affordable taxi or private hire vehicle service can make the difference that allows them to live their life the way they want to, and ultimately, to fulfil their potential.”

As a result of this update, Wiltshire’s taxi licensing team will be undertaking a review of the ranks whilst assessing accessibility issues such as dropped kerbs and shelters.

Councillors were told about the plans in the latest licensing committee meeting on Monday, March 4.

Tom Ince, Wiltshire Council’s Principal Compliance Officer, said that this review would also consider how to implement electric vehicle charging points.

He described the electrification of Wiltshire’s taxi fleet as a “big challenge.”

ROUND THE COUNCILS

SPELTHORNE:

FEES HIKES SLAMMED BY CABBIES

Taxi drivers have slammed price hikes that will see them charged more to operate in Spelthorne. One driver called the increases 'shocking' while another said the move was 'unfair'.

Spelthorne BC licensing bosses agreed to increase the cost of taxi licences by 5% and other related charges to ensure taxi fees are cost neutral so taxpayers are not subsidising the service. However, taxi drivers say they have been 'neglected and taken for granted' by the council in asking for change.

Taxi fares have remained frozen in the borough since 2015 with a planned review failing to go ahead. Drivers fees will now increase by £16 for driver's licence in a private hire vehicle to £204, while one-year operating fees have increased by £17 to £366.

Jon Barlow of BlueStar Taxis said: "There's nothing happening here. I don't know why they want to increase the fee. There's no [taxi] rank for us, no security for us, hundreds of drivers next to Heathrow [who make up traffic]."

Costs to change vehicles, which Jon said several drivers have done to avoid the extra ULEZ charges, have also increased by £8 to £175. The increases were confirmed at licensing committee earlier this month and were introduced on April 1.

The committee heard that fares have not risen in line with 2024's level of inflation, representing a 31% drop in value. Officers said the licensing department had intended to review fare tariffs in the financial year 2023/24 but due to issues with staff absences from long term illnesses and two vacant posts, this has not been possible.

Taxi drivers claimed the service from the licensing department was 'poor', with one individual calling the department a 'joke'.

Complainants also argued removing tinted windows and replacing cars when they reach ten years' old would restrict business and cause great expense to drivers and firms.

Considering the feedback, the licensing committee decided it would review the restriction on ten-year-old vehicles with the licensing policy in summer 2024. Licence holders also criticised the limited taxi ranks in the borough, as well as the 'poor' condition of faded markings on the Gresham Road taxi rank. Councillors agreed to review Gresham Road and suggested that Shepperton Station could benefit from a taxi rank.

COVENTRY:

DRIVERS FURIOUS AT RISING FEES

Coventry cabbies have said they are "struggling" as bills soar and they face rising competition for work in the city. The claims were made in response to council plans to increase licence fees. The move was agreed by a council committee on 12 March. But papers for the meeting show the proposals were met with an outcry among drivers. More than 50 wrote to the authority opposing the scheme, with just two in support.

Many said they can't afford the rise as they're already coping with high inflation and the soaring living costs. The drivers also raised concerns over rising competition with out-of-own cabbies and app-based drivers such as Uber. One said there are "not enough jobs" and most customers are hardly using black cabs. Another painted a gloomy picture of the traditional cabbie's prospects. They wrote: "I do not believe that it would be justifiable in the current circumstances that we as taxi drivers are having to face, what with rising costs across the board, with rising fuel and insurance costs and ever increasing costs for repairs and maintenance.

"Along with diminishing revenues due to Uber, the taxi hackney trade is on its last legs. It appears to me, having been in the trade for over 30 years, that this is the darkest period we have ever faced."

Several letters also called on councillors and the council's licensing office to do something about the situation. But a council report said the fees had to go up to make sure the service breaks even.

The report warned of the consequences of not doing so, stating: "Failure to increase fees in line with costs and to keep pace with inflation will result in a financial loss to the council and an increase in the council's subsidy of the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Service." Under the changes the cost of new driver licences will rise by £35-40, while renewing the licence - which has to be done by drivers every three years - will cost an extra £20.

Other fees will rise by between £2 and £17, the highest one being the driver licence renewal and licence fees for vehicles.

Operator costs will also rise by £100-£110. The changes will be brought in from 1 April.

Asked for comment on calls by cab drivers to do more, a council spokesperson said: "The points were raised in the objections made to the proposed fee increase."

iCABBI WOMEN IN TAXI

FEMALES WHO DRIVE iCABBI MEET OTHER FEMALE FLEET OWNERS AND LEADERS IN THE INDUSTRY



We got the chance to attend and network at iCabbi's inaugural Women in Taxi event at the stunning Cloud 23, Manchester on the 8th March. The gala lunch was hosted by iCabbi on International Women's Day to recognise the contribution of female fleet owners, drivers, entrepreneurs and professionals, who are working to drive the industry forward.

When asked how the Women in Taxi event came to be, iCabbi CMO, Sinead Gillett said:

"During my time at iCabbi I have encountered many individuals whom I admire for their tenacity, entrepreneurship, creativity and talent. And guess what, many of them are women.

"I've wanted to do an event like this for some time, but it was a spark from a customer that finally set it in motion. She mentioned to her Customer Success manager that she sometimes feels isolated in the industry and has experienced preconceived biases.

"This from a woman who is successfully running her taxi fleet by bringing new ideas to the business and entering new verticals. We thought, are there other women like her who should be recognised for how well they are doing and celebrated for the example they are setting for others?"

"Lots of names came to mind and so it became very clear that we should be doing more to bring these leaders together as a community."

Keynote speakers, a robust panel covering topics from leadership to the future of the sector, and lots of networking were the order of the day. The atmosphere was electric, with the gathering well overdue.

So, will iCabbi be holding this event next year? It looks likely! A Women in Taxi LinkedIn group has been set up as a networking channel for like-minded women in the industry to stay connected and get the first sneak peek of next year's event!

Join the Women in Taxi LinkedIn Group here: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12992169/>

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INSURANCE INSIGHTS

WHEN ARE AND WHEN AREN'T YOU COVERED BY TAXI INSURANCE?

Article by David Sweeney
Senior Operations Manager
The Taxi Insurer
www.taxiinsurer.co.uk



Unless explicitly confirmed by their insurer or insurance broker at the time of purchase, many taxi drivers may unwittingly find themselves in routine situations while at work where they may not be covered by their policy. This article examines some of the more common circumstances and explains how drivers can ensure they're not at risk.

PUBLIC LIABILITY

The biggest risk relates to public liability. Drivers without the correct public liability taxi cover in place could be held financially and legally liable for any accidents or damage that their passengers suffer while under their care. Public liability taxi insurance protects drivers and their business from any unforeseen circumstances in which they could be held liable for someone else's wellbeing.

Traditionally, the majority of insurers offered public liability as a separate cover from the main taxi insurance policy; these days, an increasing number of insurers offer it as standard. Although only a relatively small number of drivers ask for public liability cover, some councils or contract owners insist that drivers working for them must have it in place.

Drivers who have taken out a conventional taxi policy that excludes public liability as standard are only covered while they're inside their vehicle. As soon as they step outside of the vehicle to help a passenger in any way, their taxi insurance is no longer valid.

A typical example could involve an elderly person who has called for a taxi and asks the controller if the driver could help them from their front door into the vehicle because they're using a walking frame. The driver is good enough to do so but, in helping that person, they may cause them to fall over. That would not be covered under the driver's taxi insurance.

If they'd taken out public liability insurance, it would.

Another common scenario would see a parent returning from the supermarket with children and several bags of shopping. As the taxi driver drops their fare home, they offer to help carry the shopping into the house. Unfortunately, while putting some of the bags into the porch, the driver knocks over and damages a vase.

Without public liability cover, the driver is liable for the cost of repairing or replacing the damaged item.

School runs are the third commonplace situation in which drivers without public liability could find themselves at risk. If they're taking kids to school, drivers are liable for the child's welfare from the moment the child gets out of the vehicle until they walk through the school gates. Some councils are very strict about this responsibility and will ask insurers to complete documentation confirming that a driver's policy does cover school runs.

Drivers may also want to check the differing levels of public liability indemnity required by some councils.

Using school runs as an example: **councils occasionally ask for an increased indemnity limit for drivers contracted to carry out such activities.**

DRIVING TO ANOTHER PLACE OF WORK

Beyond public liability, the other familiar situation for which drivers are often not covered is travelling to another place of work.

Drivers with an additional occupation should ensure that their policy covers them to drive their taxi to the location of their second job.

The examples above demonstrate how important it is for drivers to check that their insurance policy covers them for every situation in which they find themselves while at work.

Whether issues of public liability or driving to a second place of work, policyholders can contact their insurer or broker to confirm that they are currently covered, particularly if their professional tasks or responsibilities have recently changed.

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BUS LANE BULLETIN

PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS IN READING FINALLY WIN ACCESS TO BUSY BUS LANE

Private hire drivers in Reading are celebrating after finally being given access to a busy bus lane.

For years private hire and taxi drivers have been allowed to use the inbound King's Road bus lane. But for the outbound lane on the other side of the road, private hire drivers have been excluded, with access only for buses, motorbikes, cyclists and hackney carriage drivers.

That is set to change after years of campaigning by drivers in the town. Private hire drivers attempted to get access to the outbound King's Road bus lane back in November 2022, but that attempt was shot down.

After that decision, the drivers set up the Reading Private Hire Association (RPHA) to advocate for drivers and continue to push for access to the bus lane.

At a recent council meeting, it was decided that Reading private hire drivers should finally be given access.

Kamran Saddiq (pictured), chairman of the RPHA, had also complained that out-of-town drivers, with licences from other authorities as far away as Fareham, the New Forest and Portsmouth, are incorrectly using the bus lane, while Reading drivers follow the rules and stick in normal traffic lanes.

Mr Saddiq said: "We work for Reading, we represent Reading, I represent Reading, we are proud to be Reading private hire drivers." Addressing concerns about taxis slowing down buses, Mr Saddiq suggested that 'authorised vehicles only' signage should be



put up to deter rule breakers.

The same sign was installed at the inbound bus lane in July 2019, which Mr Saddiq argued had curbed unauthorised access.

A formal consultation was held with 849 responses received. Of those 818 (96%) supported the change, 33 objected, with three responses neither supporting nor rejecting it.

John Ennis lead councillor for transport, called Mr Saddiq's leadership 'outstanding' and said his campaign has been 'hugely persuasive and responsible'.

Cllr Ennis (Labour, Southcote) then said that private hire drivers should be given access to the outbound lane permanently.

Agreeing, Cllr James Moore (Liberal Democrats, Tilehurst) said: "I've always found it ludicrous that one side of the road does one thing and the other side does the other."

He added that allowing private hire drivers access would reduce fares for as well.

The decision to allow private hire drivers access was unanimously agreed at the traffic management sub-committee on 6 March.

Celebrating the decision, Mr

Saddiq said: "It's fantastic, I'm really happy with the outcome considering the long struggle it's been. Bus lane access will be useful for our customers, special needs children who need to get to school, people

trying to get to the airport for their holidays and more.

"We also serve people with health issues getting to the Royal Berkshire Hospital, and those with mental health issues as well.

"It's a massive relief for everyone, including myself, as the campaign has been going on for 16 months.

"One of the councillors said that it's been going on for a significant amount of time, and they don't want to come back with the situation not being resolved later on."

The decision means the outbound bus lane will be accessible for Reading cab and private hire drivers only. A new sign will be installed to legally enforce the rule change, with estimated costs of up to £15,000.

Mr Saddiq explained: "It needs to have funds released from somewhere. The council staff will go back and talk amongst themselves about the funding.

"Luckily it's not how it's when.

"The councillors want it done as soon as possible."

Mr Saddiq now hopes that more drivers will register with Reading council to get access to the bus lane.

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TAXI CENTRE ON WHAT CABBIES NEED TO KNOW ABOUT UPGRADING TO AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE

- Searches for 'switch to electric vehicle' are up by 33% this quarter
- With costs dropping, range rising, and charging times plummeting, industry experts explain why taxi drivers should consider the switch to electric

While taxi drivers may typically only change their cars every four to five years, industry experts are advising that now is the right time to upgrade your taxi to an electric vehicle.

In fact, in the last five years, electric vehicles have gone from an expensive option of the future to a staple in the industry, accounting for over 20% of all new cars sold. It's not only becoming a more popular choice for the public, but also for taxi drivers looking to save money

and increase efficiency.

Stephen Porter, Branch Manager at The Taxi Centre explains why upgrading to an electric vehicle could be the best decision for taxi drivers in 2024:

"Five years ago, it would've been hard to imagine that purchasing an EV could be an option for an average taxi driver. With 150-mile ranges and 50 kW chargers being the best on offer, they just weren't suitable for everyone. Fears of being left stranded with low range or inefficient charging eating into working hours were enough to put many drivers off.

"But now with a growing number of EVs offering 300 miles of range and charging speeds of over 200kW the cars are significantly

more attractive. Added to this is the fact that overnight smart charging tariffs are providing costs as low as 7.5p per kWh, the option of switching into an EV taxi moves from being viable to being sensible.

"If you consider a modern EV with a 77-kWh battery, it takes 10 hours to home charge overnight at as low as 7.5p per kWh, while a full charge would only cost £5.78. This means you can do a 300-mile drive at around 2p per mile. In contrast, a petrol vehicle is going to cost you around £30-£40 for the 20+ litres of fuel that you'll need to cover 300 miles.

"This year, the UK Government brought in the ZEV mandate. This new law will require 22% of a manufacturer's sales to be EV. This percentage will increase annually. In 2028 52% of all new car sales will need to be electric and this increases to 80% in 2030. Some councils, such as Dundee, have embraced EVs and now only issue new plates if the car that is being licenced is zero emission.

"We are quickly approaching a world where the only cars available will be EV and many cities will begin implementing zero emission zones. "It's no longer a question of whether a taxi driver will buy an EV, it is a question of when they will buy one. For a growing number of drivers, the answer to that question is right now".

To find out more information on government taxi grants or browse taxis for sale visit:

<https://www.thetaxicentre.com>



CALL TO ENCOURAGE LICHFIELD CABBIES TO SWITCH TO EVS

A councillor says he wants "bold" action to encourage more cabbies to use electric or hybrid vehicles.

Cllr Paul Ray made his comments at a meeting of Lichfield District Council where he told members in the chamber that the council should incentivise drivers to switch to greener travel options.

The Lib Dem group leader said: "The objective of encouraging more EVs among the taxis in this district is one measure we can take to improve the environment.

"I'd like the council to go further and be bold like in London where all taxis have to be non-diesel or petrol by 2033. I'd like this council to have a policy like that."

Current rules mean taxis must be changed once the vehicle reaches a certain age. But Cllr Ray said incentives could be introduced to persuade drivers to go electric.

He added: "The other thing is to stress that the taxi drivers say they want the life of the vehicle to be extended from seven years to a longer period. In London it's 12 years and I understand the direction is to push that further to 15 years. That means drivers who invest in modern, clean vehicles can recoup their investment over a longer period of time.

"I hope these considerations are taken forward and seriously considered."

GREEN MEANS GO

OXFORD TAXIS AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES MUST MEET ULTRA LOW EMISSION TARGET BY 2026

Proposals to further delay the introduction of low emission taxis and PHVs on Oxford's roads by an extra year have been rejected.

Oxford City Council agreed to delay the plan until the start of 2026 at a meeting in February. But the City of Oxford Licenced Taxicab Association (COLTA) wanted the policy to come into effect in January 2027. The new policy will require taxis and other PHVs in Oxford to meet an ultra-low emission standard.

COLTA secretary Sajad Khan said: "As a trade, we don't think the one year compromise was a balanced

judgment of the facts available." He highlighted the impact of Covid saying the city's taxi drivers had "lost four productive years".

Mr Khan added that since the pandemic, the trade had "suffered an unimaginable rise in living costs due to the financial crisis and very high interest rates".

COLTA also argued that the introduction of LTNs and closure of Botley Road "created a huge disruption" and caused drivers' earnings to "drastically" reduce.

Last month, at a general purpose licensing committee meeting,

councillors agreed to delay the planned introduction in January 2025 by a year.

Louise Upton, cabinet member for planning and healthier communities, said that the council had to balance "the very real needs of the taxi trade against the health needs of our residents", and that the original extension of one year was a "compromised solution" that "seemed about right".

A council spokesperson added that roughly a third of licensed hackney carriages in the city had already moved to electric vehicles.

BASINGSTOKE AND DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL TO FUND LOW EMISSION TAXIS

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council has agreed to fund up to 17 new low-emission taxis.

Taxi drivers in the borough can now apply for support to get the hackney carriages onto the streets of Basingstoke, in a decision that was made at a cabinet meeting on Tuesday, March 5.

Licensed taxi drivers can now apply for a £5,000 grant to help pay for an electrically powered LEVC vehicle.

During the meeting Cllr Laura James, cabinet member for residents' services and housing, said the borough currently has an aging stock of taxis.

She said: "We really need to do something about it and we have always got a reducing number of hackney carriages as well, so that is of concern."

Cllr James added: "The aging population of the drivers is of concern, set against very expensive taxis which are out of price for most people.

"These taxis are accessible and they are wheelchair accessible and this is essential that we have this service."

She also told members that there is a real interest with current taxi drivers to support the initiative.

The leader of the council, Cllr Paul Harvey said the idea is great and shows the council's ambitions and aspirations.

Cabinet member for the climate, Cllr Chris Tomblin, said: "Many people rely on accessible taxis to get around. However, the diesel vehicles currently in the fleet are increasingly reaching the end of their lives and need replacing and

barriers, like cost, are discouraging existing and new drivers from taking on more modern and sustainable models.

"Our new £5,000 grants, developed through conversations with licensed drivers, aim to help make these electrically powered hackney carriages more affordable to support taxi drivers to use these environmentally friendly and accessible vehicles.

"In offering this grant, we can help to remove old diesel vehicles off the roads and replace them with a more sustainable method of travel to support our target for a net zero carbon borough by 2030.

"These ultra-low emission vehicles could also help drivers save up to £150 a week on fuel too."

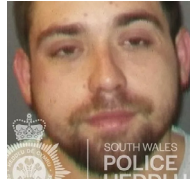
Taxi drivers can find out more at: <https://shorturl.at/otEFV>

UNJUST DESERTS

36 WEEKS' JAIL FOR BREAKING CABBIE'S NOSE IN UNPROVOKED ATTACK OUTSIDE CARDIFF VENUE

A cabbie suffered a broken nose after being punched by a drunk man in an unprovoked attack. A sentencing hearing at Cardiff Crown Court heard that the victim Parviz Hydari pulled up in his cab outside the Tramshed, in Cardiff, at around 11pm on October 12, 2022. Radoslaw Wilczek, 27 approached shouting and swearing and then punched the side of the vehicle. Mr Hydari attempted to speak to Wilczek who continued being aggressive. Wilczek reacted by punching the victim to the face through the cab's open window. The defendant began to walk away

as Mr Hydari got out of his car and checked for dents. Wilczek returned and punched the victim again, shouting and swearing and also punched the taxi. Members of the public intervened, a police car was flagged down and the defendant arrested. Mr Hydari was treated at hospital for a dislocated nose. In a victim statement he said: "I now suffer from long-term sinus issues



and 80% of the time I can't smell. "It has affected me mentally: when I am working I am worried people will go in my vehicle and become paranoid I will get attacked again. I had to have four weeks off work." Wilczek later pleaded guilty to assault occasioning actual bodily harm. The defendant has previous convictions for possession of a firearm in public, shoplifting, and affray and assault in Poland. Recorder Corinna Ferguson sentenced Wilczek to 36 weeks imprisonment but due to time spent on remand the defendant was released immediately.

SUSPENDED SENTENCES FOR HULL COUPLE WHO HIT CABBIE WITH BOTTLE AND PUNCHED HIM

An aggressive woman smashed a cabbie on the head with a bottle and her drunken boyfriend repeatedly punched him after a nasty Christmas Day argument in 2021 turned violent. A fight broke out when the driver refused to drive the couple because he did not like their "attitude" when they got into his taxi, Hull Crown Court heard. Millie Crockett, 21, and Kieron Marston, 23, both from west Hull, admitted assaulting the man, causing actual bodily harm. Stephen Welch, prosecuting, said that when the cabbie collected Crockett and Marston they slammed the door as they got in and there was an atmosphere that put the taxi driver on edge. Marston's door was not closed properly and he slammed it again



and said: "Just drive." The driver said: "I don't like your attitude. I am not taking you. I don't want you in my car. Get yourself another car." Marston sprayed the driver on his head and shoulder with a large two-litre bottle of fizzy drink. He got out and started to swing punches at the driver, who pushed him back. Marston fell over. Crockett punched him from behind and Marston pushed him over. The driver felt an injury to his head and blood started to pour from it. Crockett had hit him with

a bottle. They then left the scene. The cabbie's injuries were stitched and glued. Crockett was later seen with blood on her clothes and shoes. The driver said he suffered physical exhaustion, shock and distress and blamed himself. He had lost trust in customers and had a constant feeling of vulnerability, particularly at Christmas and had to take several months off. Crockett had no previous convictions. Marston had convictions for burglary and handling stolen goods in August 2018. Crockett was given a 10-month suspended prison sentence and ordered to pay £300 compensation to the cabbie. Marston was given a nine-month suspended sentence and told to pay £250 compensation. They were each given 200 hours' unpaid work.

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SOCIAL MEDIA SAVVY

HOW CAN VIDEO MARKETING GET YOU MORE BOOKINGS?

Article by Phil Holloway
Marketing Director
www.hollogram.com



In today's digital world, using videos is crucial for taxi companies to boost their brand presence. Everyone is on their mobile phone, 24/7... you see people everywhere you look around town, in the shops, in the pubs or cafes looking at their social media content... so YOUR taxi business needs to be talking to them!

As a marketing agency, we'll explain why videos are important for showcasing your taxi business and how they can help you connect with your local customers. We are working with many taxi business owners to help them use video marketing on their social media channels to get them more bookings, why does it work so well?

1. Demonstrating operational excellence:

Videos are great for showing what your taxi company does best. By visually highlighting your fleet and how easy it is to book a ride, potential customers can see firsthand the reliability and professionalism of your service.

2. Engaging with the local community:

Videos provide a fantastic opportunity to showcase your taxi business in familiar neighbourhoods. By featuring local streets and landmarks, you can connect with people on a personal level. When customers recognise their own areas in your videos, they'll feel a sense of connection and trust towards your brand.

3. Building emotional connections:

Seeing familiar places in your videos can create strong emotional bonds with your audience. When people feel proud of their community being represented, it strengthens their loyalty to your brand. This emotional connection goes beyond just using your service – it makes customers want to support your business.



4. Setting Yourself Apart:

Lastly, videos help you stand out in a competitive market. By telling stories that showcase your unique qualities and how you care about your customers, you differentiate yourself from other taxi companies. Whether it's highlighting personalised experiences or community involvement, videos show what makes your brand special.

5. Your competitors are already doing it...

In summary, using videos is essential for taxi companies to connect with customers and stand out. By demonstrating your operational excellence, engaging with the local community, building emotional connections, and showcasing your unique qualities, you can strengthen your brand presence and attract more customers to your business.

The Hollogram team is working with taxi companies all around the UK and helping them to get more bookings, retain more drivers and recruit and expand their teams.

If you need any help with marketing for your taxi business, get in touch with Phil Holloway at Hollogram via email phil@hollogram.com or call 01509 398 002 for a chat.

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UBER UPDATE

UBER CONFIRMS ITS LAUNCH IN SWANSEA AND STOCKTON-ON-TEES

Passengers in Swansea can now book rides with Uber for the first time in the city. The launch is in response to the rising demand with more than 4,000 locals opening the Uber app looking for a trip each week, the company said. The introduction of Uber in Swansea is the brand's first new launch in a city since 2017.

The firm was given its licence to operate by Swansea council earlier this year.

Majid Iftikhar, a driver who has already signed up for Uber in Swansea, said: "Uber is perfect for me as I can work when I'm free, my wife doesn't drive so I can drop off and pick up kids from school."

However, Richard Thomas, of

Richard's Taxi Service, felt the announcement was a "concern" for drivers in the city. He explained: "I'm disappointed, to be honest, there is no work for us now as it is, and with them, it's going to really affect us. The town is too small for Uber, it has done the dirty on the normal drivers. I don't think it will work in Swansea. I hope people will stick by the taxi service. It is a concern for everybody."

Uber is also officially set to launch in Stockton-on-Tees.

Bosses say over 4,500 local residents have been opening the Uber app looking for a trip every week.

Uber first arrived on Teesside in the form of the 'Local Cab' option

back in 2021, which allowed customers to book a taxi through the Uber app by connecting them with local taxi firm Skyline Taxis. But it is now finally launching in full across Stockton but has not yet confirmed how far across Stockton it will cover.

Rumours of Uber launching on Teesside have swirled for years, with reports in 2016 about how the company sadly had no plans to launch the taxi service in Middlesbrough, despite previously saying it was a location it had looked at for future expansion.

However, Uber Eats is already in place across several locations on Teesside and has been for several years.

UBER PAYS \$178 MILLION TO END LEGAL FIGHT WITH AUSTRALIAN TAXI DRIVERS

Uber will pay \$272 million Australian dollars (£140 million) to settle a long-running dispute with Australian taxi and hire car drivers who lost out when the company entered the Australian market.

A class action against Uber had been expected to go to trial in the Supreme Court of Victoria on Monday 18 March, but Maurice Blackburn Lawyers - representing 8,000 taxi and hire car drivers - said the case will be dropped because Uber has agreed to the financial settlement.

Maurice Blackburn, principal lawyer Michael Donnelly, said that drivers and car owners suffered financial losses due to Uber's

aggressive entry into the market in 2012 and that the company consistently attempted to avoid compensating them.

"On the courtroom steps and after years of refusing to do the right thing by those we say it harmed, Uber has blinked, and thousands of everyday Australians joined together to stare down a global giant," he said.

An Uber statement described the complaints of the taxi industry as "legacy issues" and said rideshare regulations did not exist anywhere in the world when the company started more than a decade ago.

"The rise of ridesharing has grown

Australia's overall point-to-point transport industry, bringing with it greater choice and improved experiences for consumers, as well as new earnings opportunities for hundreds of thousands of Australian workers," the statement said.

"Since 2018, Uber has made significant contributions into various state-level taxi compensation schemes, and with today's proposed settlement, we put these legacy issues firmly in our past."

It's the fifth-largest class action settlement in Australia's history and comes five years after the action was launched.

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SHAME SHAME

SUSPENDED SENTENCE FOR **NORWICH** CABBIE OVER CANNABIS DEALING

A Norwich cabbie has been given a suspended jail sentence after admitting to being involved in drug dealing. Khubayb Budeeb, 29, was found with a large bag of cannabis after being stopped by police. Officers later found £13,545 in cash inside a safe at his home, Norwich Crown Court was told.

Analysis of his phone also found messages indicative of drug dealing.

Oliver Haswell, prosecuting, said police responding to a blue lights emergency had been hampered by a taxi in May 2020 with the driver seen to be on his mobile

phone. When the taxi was stopped a pungent smell led officers to a blue plastic bag containing 163 grams of cannabis estimated by police to be worth £1,630.

Asked about this he said it had been a bulk purchase that he had intended to share with four others," said Mr Haswell.

He also claimed the large amount of cash found at his home had been "legitimately earned" from his work as a taxi driver.

Budeeb, from Norwich, pleaded guilty to possession of cannabis with intent to supply.

Matthew Edwards, mitigating,

said: "He was a cannabis smoker and was facilitating its purchase for a friendship group. "This was during Covid and he was using cannabis to self medicate."

He has since had two children, no longer used drugs and was "trying to build a better future" despite having lost his taxi licence, he added.

Sentencing him to 40 weeks in prison, suspended for 18 months, Recorder Nicola Fitches said the impact on his wife and children had spared him immediate custody. He must also complete 10 rehabilitation days and 150 hours unpaid work.

CABBIES SLAMMED OVER HORRENDOUS WEEING AND POOING NEAR **HEATHROW** AIRPORT HOMES

Cabbies defecating in bushes and on streets near Heathrow Airport have pushed Spelthorne Council to act. Tents, barbecues and cab parking will be banned to prevent anti-social behaviour in a new Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) by the council. Warnings, fixed penalty notices of up to £1,000, and potential prosecution for offenders was agreed as part of the PSPO at a Spelthorne committee meeting on March 21. The crackdown seeks to end what residents describe as a "horrendous" situation where they've had to tolerate cab drivers waiting to pick up Heathrow fares "weeing and pooing" in public areas near their homes despite available toilet facilities nearby.

Stanwell residents said in response to the consultation: "We want our

village back" and "Enough is enough". One respondent said they had challenged private hire drivers for dropping litter and felt they are "putting [their] personal safety at risk" with some drivers being verbally "aggressive".

Vehicles will be allowed to pick up or drop off a fare within the prohibited area, if the company operating the vehicle is based in, or the driver lives in, the exclusion area. Heathrow Airport agreed with the council's proposed measures for a zone in the Stanwell Moor area where cabbies will not be allowed to park after feedback from residents made the airport aware of the anti-social behaviour issues. Meeting documents state: "The proposed PSPO seeks to protect the community from the detrimental effect on the quality of

life" from those "continuing unreasonable behaviours".

There have been reports of people staying in tents on public land and using areas of parks as a toilet. Specialist cleaning companies have had to be deployed on several occasions, costing the council £1,000 per clean.

Council officers said there will be discretion in the enforcement of the rules. Enforcement officers from the council and Surrey Police will be given further powers to deal with the highlighted issues. The PSPO will last for at least three years from 2024.

Around 70% of 349 respondents agreed with the proposals in a consultation held in January this year. Surrey Police, Heathrow Airport and Staines Moor Masters were also involved it.

SHAME SHAME

FORMER **THANET** CABBIE JAILED FOR OVER 15 YEARS FOR RAPE OFFENCES AGAINST CHILDREN

A former Thanet cabbie has been jailed for three offences of rape of a child and one of sexual activity with a child.

Shane Aaron Keeler, from Ramsgate, appeared for sentencing at Canterbury Crown Court on 22 February. He was sentenced to 14 and a half years imprisonment, followed by one additional year on licence.

Keeler had previous complaints of harassment, stalking and breaches of restraining and non molestation orders against him.

A victim who dropped their case in order for the rape offences against children to be brought forward said: "I'm glad I dropped my original case against him as if I didn't, this current case wouldn't have been brought to light, and due to the nature of this case as horrific as it is, he is off the streets for a lot longer.

"The mental trauma is horrific. I just can't believe everything he has done to people and (previously) got away with.

"Until the restraining order and

charges of harassment, he had a clean record which is absolutely disgusting considering the amount of things found against him. But no-one was brave enough to go further.

"I get so angry that for so long he has been let off. A true narcissist and bully. He is a nasty man who fooled many victims and manipulated many people."

Keeler had previously been stripped of his taxi licence by Thanet council after being deemed unfit to hold it.

PAEDOPHILE **VALE** TAXI/BUS DRIVER LEFT VICTIMS SUICIDAL AFTER ATTACKS SPANNING DECADES

A paedophile carried out a series of sexual assaults on vulnerable young girls over several decades. Dennis Yarr subjected his victims to sickening attacks leaving them suicidal, depressed and unable to feel safe around men.

A hearing at Cardiff Crown Court on 20 March heard Yarr, who is Scottish and was working as a bus and taxi driver in the Vale of Glamorgan, accused his victims of lying before being found guilty of indecent assault and indecency with a child at trial in February this year. Judge Timothy Petts said Yarr had shown "no remorse" for his actions and described him as "manipulative and predatory".

The court heard Yarr, 63, of Westage-on-Sea, Kent, carried out a series of disgusting attacks on a young girl in the 1990s. This included touching inside her underwear and on one occasion

penetrating her. He told his victim not to tell anyone to stop her reporting the ordeal.

Yarr was also found to have indecently assaulted another girl in the 1990s by encouraging her to get into his car before asking her to sit on his lap while he drove, at which point he touched her crotch area.

The court also heard Yarr had carried out another offence on a girl when he was a teenager in the 1970s by getting her to sit on his lap and perform a sex act.

He later pleaded guilty to indecent assault and was given a conditional discharge.

South Wales Police began investigating Yarr after one of his victims came forward. He was arrested in Margate, Kent, in



December 2020 and two more victims later came forward. Yarr was found guilty of four counts of indecent assault and one count of indecency with a child following a week-long trial at Cardiff Crown Court last month.

Judge Timothy Petts said Yarr had caused "severe psychological harm" to his victims and that there was "very little" to mitigate what he had done. He said it was noted that the defendant "showed no remorse" and was "manipulative and predatory" in how he carried out the attacks and tried to prevent his victims from reporting what had happened.

Yarr was sentenced to seven years in prison and an extra year on licence. He will be registered as a sex offender for life. He was also banned from working with children or vulnerable adults and a sexual harm prevention order was made.

WHATSAPP TAXI BOOKINGS

MAKING TAXI BOOKINGS EASIER & FASTER THAN EVER! AUTOMATE YOUR BOOKING PROCESS USING WHATSAPP

Article by M2M TaxiBot
www.m2mtaxibot.com



Are your customers tired of the hassle of booking a taxi? Are you always on the go and need a quick and convenient way to get more taxi bookings?

Look no further, because we have the perfect solution for you! Thanks to the groundbreaking technology developed by M2M Data Connect Limited, making taxi bookings has never been easier or faster.

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TAXI BOOKINGS REVOLUTIONISED BY TOP 100 IoT MVNO LEADER IN AUTOMATION

M2M Data Connect Limited, a recognised leader in the IoT industry and named among the top 100 IoT MVNO Leaders for 2023, has revolutionised the way taxi bookings are made.



Our M2M Omnichannel automation technology ensures that your booking is handled efficiently and accurately, leaving you with more time to focus on what truly matters.

So why waste any more time with outdated booking methods? Embrace the future of taxi bookings with our WhatsApp integration and experience the difference for yourself.

Say goodbye to long wait times and frustrating phone calls – with M2M Data Connect Limited, booking a taxi has never been easier or faster.

BENEFITS OF AUTOMATING TAXI BOOKINGS

In today's digital age, the convenience of automation has revolutionised the way we do things, including booking taxis. Gone are the days of waiting on hold with a dispatcher or struggling to find a taxi stand in the rain. With the rise of technology, automating taxi bookings has become the best way to ensure a seamless and hassle-free experience for both passengers and drivers.

By utilising tools such as AI ChatBots and WhatsApp, taxi companies can now provide 24/7 booking services, allowing customers to book a ride at any time of day or night. This not only saves time but also saves money for taxi companies by reducing the need for around-the-clock phone operators.

Automating taxi booking is not only convenient for passengers, but it also increases the efficiency and productivity of drivers.

With automated systems in place, drivers can easily track and manage their bookings, reducing the risk of missed rides and maximising their earning potential.

In conclusion, automating taxi bookings through AI ChatBots and other technologies is the future of the transportation industry.

It not only benefits passengers and drivers but also streamlines operations for taxi companies, making it the best way to get more taxi bookings.

M2M WHATSAPP TAXIBOT

The M2M WhatsApp TaxiBot comes with full API integration with Autocab. So you don't have to go looking for a reliable and cost-efficient solution.

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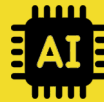
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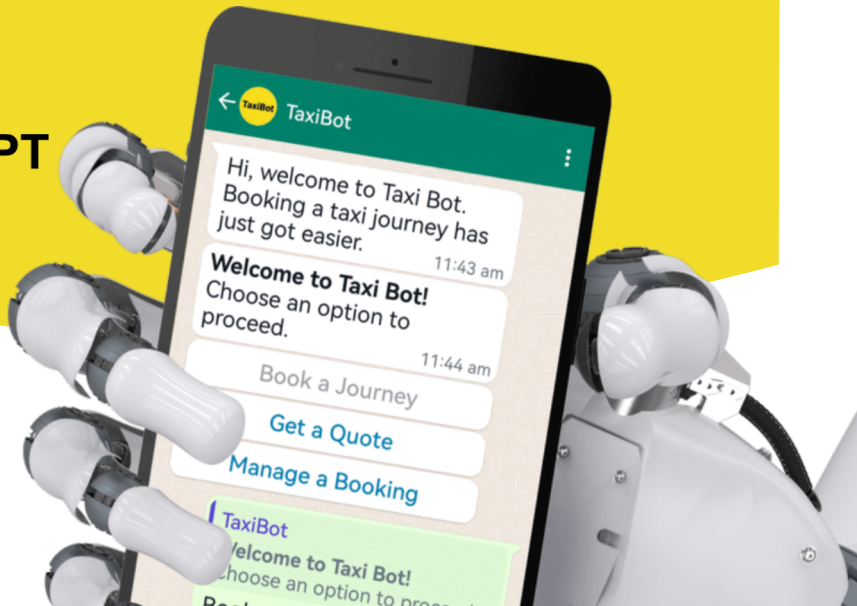
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MARKETING STRATEGY SUCCESS

THE POWER OF VISUAL CONTENT FOR TAXI FIRMS: DRIVING ENGAGEMENT & BUILDING TRUST LOCALLY

taxisolutions In today's digital age, visual content has become the cornerstone of successful marketing strategies. The key to competing with big national corporations is playing to your strengths as a local, community focused firm with the knowledge to provide a better service locally. The best way to connect with local audiences is through local content.

So here's why investing in professionally created photography and video is crucial for showcasing your brand effectively on social media and on your website:

Engage your audience with video content

Video has emerged as the most persuasive form of content on social media platforms. TikTok is growing daily and it's used for much more than just daft dances. For taxi firms, leveraging local video content offers a unique opportunity to showcase your vehicles, services, and brand personality in action. Whether it's a virtual tour of your fleet, customer testimonials, pickups throughout the local area or behind-the-scenes footage of your drivers, videos allow you to deeply connect with your audience and leave a lasting impression.

Establish credibility with professional photography

High-quality photography is essential for making a positive first impression and establishing credibility with your audience. Professional images will see your vehicles captured in common and locally relevant locations with the right angles and lighting to be used for multiple online platforms. Not only will professional photography showcase the quality of your service but it also conveys a sense of trust and reliability. From iconic landmarks to bustling city streets, visually striking photographs help potential customers visualise themselves using your services and builds confidence in your firm.

Local relevance and authenticity

Looking at the popularity of YouTube and TikTok it's clear that people crave authenticity and personalised experiences, over pre-recorded, scripted stock content. Locally relevant content is key to catching passenger attention and driving engagement. By featuring your vehicles in familiar local settings and highlighting their presence in the community, you demonstrate your commitment to serving the needs of local residents and businesses. Whether it's showcasing your taxis



outside landmarks, local events or transportation hubs, locally relevant content reinforces your taxi firm's connection to the community.

Enhancing your online presence

Your website and social media channels serve as digital storefronts of your taxi firm, offering potential customers a glimpse into what sets you apart from the competition. By incorporating visually compelling content you create immersive online experiences that captivate visitors and encourages them to engage with your brand. Whether it's attracting new customers, contracts & drivers, boosting bookings, or increasing brand loyalty, compelling visual content plays a crucial role in driving more bookings and growing your business online.

Partner with TaxiSolutions for professional video and photography services

At Taxisolutions, we understand the importance of visually captivating content in driving engagement and building trust with your audience. Our team of experienced photographers and videographers specialises in creating locally relevant, high-quality content tailored to the unique needs of taxi firms. From stunning photography to engaging videos and drone work, we'll help you showcase your brand in the best possible light and stand out in a competitive market.

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GLASGOW CABBIE'S NOSE BROKEN BY THUG WHO AMBUSHED HIM OVER CASH ROW

A thug and his friends ambushed a taxi driver following a row over paying with cash. Ryan Hamilton, 34, and two others pounced on Iyoha Edene in Glasgow's Ibrox on June 14 2023.

The court heard the driver picked up Hamilton who told Mr Edene to "just drive." Prosecutor Katie Malcolm said: "Mr Edene asked if he had sufficient money to pay for the service. He was told by Hamilton that he could pay with his watch and his phone.

"Hamilton was told that he would be required to pay with money. He

then became aggressive and argued with Mr Edene."

The driver told his passenger to get out of the vehicle before Hamilton attempted to punch him.

He walked around to the driver's door and demanded Mr Edene "get out of the f***ing vehicle."

Hamilton stated: "I want to kill you" and called him a "black b*****."

Miss Malcolm said: "Mr Edene got out the taxi and Hamilton punched and kicked him to the head and body, causing the victim to fall to the ground.

"Hamilton called on his two friends

who joined in on the assault."

Police later attended, traced Hamilton and arrested him.

Mr Edene was taken to hospital with a broken nose, wounds to his hand and arm as well as swelling to his left eye.

Hamilton pleaded guilty on 20 March, at Glasgow Sheriff Court to acting in a racially aggravated manner. He also admitted assaulting Mr Edene to his severe injury.

Sentence was deferred pending background reports until next month by Sheriff Tony Kelly who continued Hamilton's bail.

ROAD RAGE THUG ATTACKED GLASGOW TAXI DRIVER AFTER HE BEEPED HORN FOR CUSTOMER

A taxi driver was attacked after he beeped his horn for a customer in a mistaken case of road rage.

Ibraheem Khan, 27, pounced on Abdelella Yousif in Glasgow's St George's Cross on November 13, 2022.

Glasgow Sheriff Court heard that Khan's VW Golf was stopped at a green light when Mr Yousif pulled in behind him and sounded his horn to indicate to his customer that he had arrived.

Occupants in the Golf took issue with this with one of the passengers shouting at Mr Yousif. Khan moved off through the lights and came to a stop a short distance ahead of Mr Yousif's taxi.

Khan's passenger shouted and gestured aggressively at Mr Yousif before the pair exited the Golf.

Prosecutor Alasdair Knox said: "Mr Yousif's driver's side window was

open and the male passenger punched the victim to the head and face through the window.

"The male passenger then opened the driver door, whilst continuing to punch Mr Yousif.

"Khan approached and repeatedly punched him to the head. Khan then walked back to the Golf."

Mr Yousif's nose was burst and covered in blood due to the attack. Khan drove off at speed and entered the wrong side of the road before returning to the correct lane.

He also failed to stop at two red traffic lights before he collided with a vehicle near St George's Cross subway station.

Police attended and noted "significant damage" to both vehicles.

Mr Yousif was taken to hospital where he was treated for a nasal

fracture, swelling to his face, oral cavity damage, a chipped front tooth and a loose tooth.

Khan's defence advocate John Scullion KC told the court: "There was a misunderstanding at the driver beeping his horn to alert the customer. It was thought he was beeping the horn at the Golf."

Khan, from Glasgow, pleaded guilty on 21 March to assaulting Mr Yousif to his severe injury and permanent disfigurement. He also admitted a separate charge of dangerous driving.

Sentence was deferred pending background reports until May, Khan was disqualified from driving in the interim period.

The sheriff said: "I will continue bail – be aware all sentencing options remain open due to the consequences of the assault and the nature of the driving."

MEN FROM WOKING WANTED OVER VIOLENT HEATHROW AIRPORT ATTACK OF CABBIE

A taxi driver at Heathrow Airport has been seriously injured following an 'unprovoked' assault as he waited to collect a passenger. Met Police investigating the attack are appealing for help to identify two men wanted in connection with the assault on January 10.

The assault left the victim with multiple fractures to his face. The two men are believed to have travelled to Heathrow on a bus from Woking.

The victim was waiting to collect a passenger at the arrivals hall at Heathrow Terminal 5. While there, he was approached by two men



who engaged in an apparently unprovoked verbal altercation with the victim, and then one of men punched him in the face, causing him to fall to the ground.

Police and medical staff were called and attended shortly after,

but the two men had made off by that time. As a result of the assault, the victim was left with fractures to his eye and nose.

Investigating officer DC Ben Benlounes, from the Met's Aviation Policing Command, said: "This was a violent and unprovoked attack, which has left the victim with very serious injuries to his face.

"We're now releasing these images to see if anyone can help us. Anyone who has information about the two men or about the assault have been asked to contact police by calling 101 and quote reference 1000114/24.

CABBIE REVEALS MAD ORDEAL AFTER BEING STABBED OVER £20 FARE IN STOKE-ON-TRENT

A taxi driver has spoken about the terrifying ordeal he faced after being stabbed by a knife-wielding clubber over a £20 fare.

Darren Dale was attacked on the morning of March 16, leaving him with several stab wounds.

He picked his passenger up from Stoke-on-Trent city centre and the 53-year-old initially described the man as 'chatty'. However the situation suddenly escalated when they pulled up.

Darren said the passenger started to "threaten" him so he leapt out of the car. Darren said: "At this point I thought 'Oh my God, what am I going to do.' I went towards him and pushed him away. That's when he swiped at me. It was a very mad ordeal."

The dad-of-one, managed to reverse out of the cul-de-sac after



getting back in his car.

He explained: "I wanted to keep him in sight, he followed me up the road. I was on the phone to the emergency services and I could feel my shirt getting wetter and wetter with blood."

Staffordshire Police and West Midlands Ambulance Service found Darren and he was taken to hospital. Medics told Darren he had a lucky escape.

He added: "I have two cuts on my

head in two different directions, one of them is very deep. I also got a stab wound in my side. They said I was lucky that it hit one of my ribs. It was terrible."

The driver had never experienced anything like that before in his 23 years of being a cabbie in the city.

He added: "I've had all sorts of ordeals in the past, people running off not paying the fare, people being sick in the car and not paying for the mess, but I've never experienced anything on this scale. "All my family are saddened by it. Everybody is upset it happened."

A police spokesman said: "We arrested an 18-year-old man, from Stoke-on-Trent, on suspicion of causing actual bodily harm, criminal damage and robbery.

"He has been released on police bail while enquiries continue."



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ALL THINGS LICENSING

Article by Mike Smith, Senior Specialist for Licensing and Community Safety at Guildford Borough Council and Vice-Chair of the Institute of Licensing South East Region.

Please note that this article represents my own views which are not presented as the views of the Institute of Licensing or Guildford BC.

Autonomous/self-driving vehicles and the licensing regime

Over the last few years, artificial intelligence (AI) has announced itself on the world stage. AI can now convincingly write academic work, stories and create lifelike images. It is even starting to drive cars and therefore it poses a significant and considerable threat for many jobs.

A decade ago, the taxi and private hire industry was being revolutionised by app-based bookings, however this still very much relied on a driver in a licensed vehicle. So what impact AI is going to have on the industry is unimaginable considering the concept of a driver driving a car was considered untouchable a decade ago.

I recently came across an article about self-driving cars being a possibility on the UK's motorways by 2026, so it appears the pace of change is very much on the upward curve.

Needless to say the Government is currently discussing The Autonomous Vehicle Bill (AVB), (<https://shorturl.at/fLNZ5>) which is designed to introduce a number of safeguards in respect of the introduction of self-driving cars on our roads.

Clearly there are many arguments for and against self-driving vehicles, and probably a huge difference in public opinion, which I do not intend to debate here, rather focus on the potential licensing of such vehicles.

How does the Autonomous Vehicle Bill interact with existing licensing law?

Simply put, true 'self-driving cars' won't. It is difficult to imagine a self-driving vehicle operating as a hackney carriage whereby it could be

either hailed in the street or taken from a rank immediately. Clearly any operator is likely to want the customer to book so that their details and destinations are known. As such this, is very much private hire territory.

However the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 at section 80 defines a private hire vehicle as a "motor vehicle constructed or adapted to seat fewer than nine passengers, other than a hackney carriage or public service vehicle, which is provided for hire with the services of a driver for the purpose of carrying passengers." (My emphasis added).

As such, the legislation only regulates private hire services where a vehicle and, crucially, a driver are provided. Therefore, if a car is truly self-driving, a driver will not be required and hence it will fall outside of scope of the current legislation.

So what does the Autonomous Vehicle Bill say?

Part 5 of the AVB deals with 'permits' for automated passenger services with section 82 of the AVB providing a power for a 'National Authority' to issue permits for the provision of automated passenger services in a vehicle which is designed or adapted to travel autonomously, or a vehicle which is being developed and trialled for such as service.

Clearly therefore, the government intends the regulation of self-driving passenger services to be regulated by an as yet undefined 'National Authority'.

The next part of the AVB at section 83 is a crucial 'disapplication' of existing taxi, private hire vehicle and bus legislation whereby the holder of a permit to provide an autonomous vehicle service is not to be treated as operating as a taxi or private hire service. Therefore, it is clear that autonomous vehicle operators are not required to be licensed under existing law, but will be required to hold a permit under this new regime.

However, section 84(2)(a) of the AVB appears to indicate that a holder of a permit is not entitled to provide the service of carrying passengers in a standard road vehicle, thus providing a safeguard to the existing licensing system.

ALL THINGS LICENSING



self-driving cars may only be possible on motorways by 2026, there are likely to be a few more years until the more difficult to navigate and busier town and city centre streets, which are the cornerstone of the existing trade, face competition.

So how would a Permit Scheme work?

Permits would be issued by a National Authority, which would issue permits to a service provider in an area to operate a particular type of vehicle. As with the current legislation, conditions may be attached to permits and it would be a civil offence not to comply with conditions.

Permits would be granted to services which would be provided on the assumption they would otherwise operate in a way which required a taxi or private hire vehicle licence.

There would be a requirement for the National Authority to consult with the relevant licensing authority of the area in which the service is to operate, and a requirement to consult with the traffic authority and emergency services for that area.

Licensing authorities would have the ability to object to the granting of a permit in their area, but would need to give reasons for their objection. If the licensing authority failed to give reasons for the objection, or failed to respond to a consultation request from the National Authority within six weeks, then the authority it would be deemed to have given consent.

To Conclude:

Obviously the AVB also contains a number of other technical aspects about autonomous vehicle technology which I am not qualified to review. However, in respect of interaction with the current licensing regime, it is clear that self-driving passenger services would sit outside the present law with a new, national permit scheme being introduced.

Furthermore, the existing licensing law will continue unless replaced or repealed and it is likely that if

Certainly, there is an expectation in the AVB that this will be the position as the local authority is to be a consultee on any permit to operate an autonomous service, although authorities will likely need guidance about the criteria they can use to comment on any such application.

In addition, public attitude to new technology and potential cost will also likely pose considerable barriers for many services. Personally speaking, it will be some time until I feel comfortable stepping into a car driven by a computer, and for many there is a certain enjoyment about either driving or being driven by someone else.

As such it is likely that there will remain a significant demand for existing services. Ultimately, taxi and private hire drivers in licensed vehicles play a considerable part of a customers' journey where customers rely on the drivers' experience and assistance as part of the service. This would of course be lost if the driver were absent in an autonomous vehicle.

Looking to the future as we begin to get to grips with the idea and rapidly evolving world of AI and autonomous vehicles, there is no more important time to be 'in the know' about licensing issues affecting the trade and I would again encourage members of the trade to join the Institute of Licensing.

Looking to a more immediate (and perhaps more certain) future, it is about this time of year where I start looking forward to the **PHTM EXPO** in May and I look forward to seeing as many members of the trade as possible on the Institute of Licensing stand.

In the meantime, full details of the IoL available at:
www.instituteoflicensing.org



Brighton & Hove Cab Trade View

Andy Peters



Brighton & Hove Cab Trade Association
info@bhcta.co.uk www.bhcta.co.uk

Serial taxi fraudster

We currently have a notorious, previously convicted taxi fraudster (2017) in the city who will take a cab from a rank and run out of town racking up an average fare of £30. This happened several times last year with the usual scenario of presenting his card which always fails, and then he goes through the motion of pretending to do a bank transfer which never takes place.

Stupidly he recently revealed his phone number to a driver whilst getting into a protracted series of text messages. So, having gathered various statements from drivers via our local taxi Whatsapp network, I presented this to the police along with crime numbers. As it turned out, last year he was subject to a community order for similar fraud, and as the police officer I was communicating with stated “... *it looks like he hasn't learnt his lesson*” hopefully, very soon this !!@###! will get far more than a community order.

Fare Increase

Following on from my March ramblings, there were no objections to our recent fare review proposal meaning that we have now moved from £2.70 per mile to £3 per mile. This will no doubt make the Uber drivers here cry more than they normally do considering that they are mostly running around for much less, and constantly moaning about the Uber ‘Lowest Bidder’ system.

It's not always about the money

I got a job to pick up at the supermarket the other day and as I approached, I saw the tiniest old lady

with one of those wheely shopper trollies. This was the tartan type like my grandmother used to have years ago that she took to the local greengrocers into which the weighed spuds and veg would be tipped - fond memories.

Anyway, I parked up and got out of the cab, and she wanted to sit in front. No problem, and I put the trolley in the boot.

I got back in the cab and there she was, feet dangling above the floor, and with the most enormous drip of snot that I have ever seen hanging off the end of her nose. I swear that if I twanged it, it would have played D#. I could have put up with that as is, but she needed to put her seat belt on.

Yes, I could have taken the risk and just driven off, but the car would start screaming at me, and no doubt with the slightest touch of the brake she would shoot off the seat and go smack into the dashboard. The CCTV video of this would probably get a lot of hits on YouTube, but as I don't have access to it, nor with being a responsible licensed driver would I do that anyway, the evidence would have been that she was not strapped in.

Ultimately as a responsible licensed driver with someone who would probably be classed as vulnerable, I would more than likely get the blame for having the face of this little old lady imprinted on the dash.

So, I said to her: “*You need to put the seat belt on.*” She responded: “*What?*” So I repeated, but louder and slower: “*YOU - NEED - TO - PUT - THE - SEAT - BELT - ON.*”

Fortunately, she heard this and understood. Now bear in mind that I had not put the meter on as yet so this is my time being used, but that is the way I work. However, whilst she looked to the left for the belt, and then to the right, with our new friend, ‘D#’ snot-string following her around albeit a millisecond later wobbling when she stopped, I could see that I was going to have to help her.



Brighton & Hove Cab Trade View



**IT'S NOT
ALWAYS
ABOUT
THE MONEY!**

I do carry a box of 'Man Size' tissues on the back parcel shelf, and rubber gloves for dire emergencies, so the only way forward now was to tell her that I will help with the seat belt and try and be tactful in 'Operation Snot-String Removal' before I attempt the mission.

Having grabbed the box of tissues, as I considered that even one or two 'Man Size' ones would not be enough, I went round and opened the door and prepared myself for the task. But there was absolutely no way I could have attempted this without 'Snot-String D#' and me coming into contact, and by the look of it, it had progressively grown in length and bulk.

The only way to handle this was to be brutally honest so I said to her: *"You have a bit of a runny nose dear"*. *"Really"* she said, *"Yes"* I replied and told her: *"I have got some tissues here for you to use."*

So, I pulled out a bunch of tissues and gave them to her and she proceeded to apprehend 'Snot-String D#' and catch most of it, and then handed the tissue back to me.... but I told her it would be best to hang onto it.

Great! Mission accomplished and I am able to sort the seat belt out and off we go, almost forgetting to put the meter on. However, as I am driving along, I glance to my left and a new snot-string appears, and slowly starts to drip, and it's not as if I

can go any faster with these blinking 20mph limits! By the time I got to the destination this 'Snot-String D#' twin has now attached itself to her coat and the seatbelt!

It's now time to get her out and finish the job, so I jumped out, opened the boot, grabbed the trolley and went to open the door for her.

She is sitting there having got her purse open, trying to take out a note, whilst at the same time 'Snot-String D#' twin continues to flow in the direction of the open purse. So, I said to her: *"Don't worry about the money for this one, you can have this on me"*.

She certainly heard that and didn't argue. I now have to give her some more tissues and get her to tackle 'Snot-String D#' twin which she eventually does.

As I reached over to unclip the seatbelt and let it roll back into position with snot stain on it and helped her out of the car, she tried to hand me back the snot-soaked bunch of tissues, but I politely declined and suggested she keeps it in her pocket.

I then had the task of making sure she got into her home safely and she grabbed hold of my arm as she shuffled across the pavement, through the gate and up to her door. I suggested to her that she got her key out whilst I went back for the trolley.

When I got back, she was struggling to get the key out of her purse, so I helped her with this and opened the door, making sure she got in. I then put the trolley inside.

It's at this point that I sadly reflect on the surroundings, which I won't go into, and I said goodbye. As I reached to close the door I heard her say: *"Thank you."* So I called back: *"Take care, hope to see you again"*.

Would I take her again..... of course I would.

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36	UTTLESFORD	£8.30
37	BCP	£8.20
38	BROXBORNE	£8.20
39	EAST HERTS	£8.20
40	GLASGOW	£8.20
41	GRAVESHAM	£8.20
42	HART	£8.20
43	MANCHESTER	£8.20
44	RESTORMEL	£8.20
45	WOKINGHAM	£8.20
46	WORTHING	£8.20
47	FOREST OF DEAN	£8.13
48	BRENTWOOD	£8.10
49	PLYMOUTH	£8.10
50	SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE	£8.10
51	VALE OF WHITE HORSE	£8.10
52	MOLE VALLEY	£8.08
53	CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE	£8.05
54	BRECKLAND	£8.00
55	COVENTRY	£8.00
56	MAIDSTONE	£8.00
57	NOTTINGHAM	£8.00
58	RIBBLE VALLEY	£8.00
59	RUSHCLIFFE	£8.00
60	SOUTH GLOUCESTER	£8.00
61	TANDRIDGE	£8.00
62	TORRIDGE	£8.00
63	TUNBRIDGE WELLS	£8.00
64	YORK	£8.00
65	ISLE OF MAN	£7.90
66	ROTHER	£7.90
67	ADUR	£7.80
68	BRACKNELL FOREST	£7.80
69	EASTBOURNE	£7.80
70	HASTINGS	£7.80
71	NORTH SOMERSET	£7.80
72	NORTH YORKSHIRE	£7.80
73	RUSHMOOR	£7.80
74	SOUTH HAMS	£7.80
75	SURREY HEATH	£7.80
76	WAYERLEY	£7.80
77	CHELMSFORD	£7.70
78	DACORUM	£7.70
79	HIGH PEAK	£7.70
80	SWINDON	£7.70
81	WEALDON	£7.70
82	EAST DEVON	£7.68
83	WILTSHIRE	£7.68
84	SHETLAND ISLES	£7.62

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
85	BASINGSTOKE & DEANE	£7.60
86	BRISTOL	£7.60
87	EAST AYRSHIRE	£7.60
88	FIFE	£7.60
89	KERRIER	£7.60
90	LEICESTER	£7.60
91	MONMOUTHSHIRE	£7.60
92	SOUTH SOMERSET	£7.60
93	STEVENAGE	£7.60
94	TEST VALLEY	£7.60
95	THREE RIVERS	£7.60
96	WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND	£7.60
97	WINCHESTER	£7.60
98	TORBAY	£7.51
99	BATH & N. E. SOMERSET	£7.50
100	CARDIFF	£7.50
101	CHESTER	£7.50
102	EPPING FOREST	£7.50
103	EXETER	£7.50
104	IPSWICH	£7.50
105	MID SUFFOLK	£7.50
106	MILTON KEYNES	£7.50
107	NORTH HERTS	£7.50
108	OXFORD CITY	£7.50
109	SOUTH NORFOLK	£7.50
110	TAMESIDE	£7.50
111	BIRMINGHAM	£7.40
112	CANTERBURY	£7.40
113	EAST HAMPSHIRE	£7.40
114	EAST RENFREW	£7.40
115	EASTLEIGH	£7.40
116	GLOUCESTER	£7.40
117	LEWES	£7.40
118	NORTH TYNESIDE	£7.40
119	PORTSMOUTH UA	£7.40
120	SOLIHULL	£7.40
121	SOUTH AYRSHIRE	£7.40
122	TEWKESBURY	£7.40
123	WEST OXFORD	£7.40
124	NEWARK & SHERWOOD	£7.37
125	NEW FOREST	£7.35
126	ASHFORD	£7.30
127	BLACKBURN	£7.30
128	CAMBRIDGE CITY	£7.30
129	DARTFORD	£7.30
130	DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL	£7.30
131	NORTH DEVON	£7.30
132	NORWICH	£7.30
133	SHROPSHIRE	£7.30
134	SOUTH CAMBRIDGE	£7.30
135	MORAY	£7.26
136	TEIGNBRIDGE	£7.26
137	NEUNEATON & BEDWORTH	£7.25
138	BASILDON	£7.20
139	DERBY	£7.20
140	DORSET	£7.20
141	GOSPORT	£7.20
142	HARLOW	£7.20
143	LUTON	£7.20
144	NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE	£7.20
145	REIGATE & BANSTEAD	£7.20
146	SLOUGH	£7.20
147	SOUTH LAKELAND	£7.20
148	STOCKPORT	£7.20
149	WEST NORTHANTS	£7.20

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
1	LONDON (HEATHROW)	£13.00
2	LUTON AIRPORT	£12.60
3	TfL	£11.00
4	EPSOM & EWELL	£10.60
5	GUILDFORD	£10.00
6	CARADON	£9.60
7	NORTH CORNWALL	£9.60
8	ELMBRIDGE	£9.50
9	JERSEY	£9.26
10	CARRICK	£9.20
11	ST ALBANS	£9.15
12	READING	£9.00
13	MIDLOTHIAN	£8.80
14	BRIGHTON & HOVE	£8.70
15	GUERNSEY	£8.70
16	SEVENOAKS	£8.70
17	WOKING	£8.70
18	WEST BERKSHIRE	£8.60
19	PENWITH	£8.52

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
150	WEST SUFFOLK	£7.20
151	CHESTERFIELD	£7.16
152	TAMWORTH	£7.14
153	ARGYLL & BUTE	£7.13
154	CANNOCK CHASE	£7.10
155	COTSWOLD	£7.10
156	CRAWLEY	£7.10
157	DOVER	£7.10
158	HIGHLAND	£7.10
159	ISLE OF WIGHT	£7.10
160	MENDIP	£7.10
161	OLDHAM	£7.10
162	RUGBY	£7.10
163	WINDSOR & MAIDENHEAD	£7.10
164	RUNNYMEDE	£7.10
165	HARBOROUGH	£7.09
166	BABERGH	£7.00
167	BROMSGROVE	£7.00
168	CARLISLE	£7.00
169	CARMARTHENSHIRE	£7.00
170	CHICHESTER	£7.00
171	HERTSMERE	£7.00
172	HORSHAM	£7.00
173	KINGS LYNN & WEST NORFOLK	£7.00
174	MACCLESFIELD	£7.00
175	MEDWAY	£7.00
176	NEWPORT	£7.00
177	PEMBROKESHIRE	£7.00
178	SUNDERLAND	£7.00
179	SWANSEA	£7.00
180	WELWYN HATFIELD	£7.00
181	WESTERN ISLES	£7.00
182	SANDWELL	£6.92
183	BRAINTREE	£6.90
184	BURY	£6.90
185	COLCHESTER	£6.90
186	WORCESTER CITY	£6.90
187	AMBER VALLEY	£6.80
188	BARROW IN FURNESS	£6.80
189	BEDFORD	£6.80
190	BLACKPOOL	£6.80
191	BOSTON	£6.80
192	BRIDGEND	£6.80
193	BROXTOWE	£6.80
194	CEREDIGION	£6.80
195	EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE	£6.80
196	EAST LINDSEY	£6.80
197	EAST SUFFOLK (SOUTH)	£6.80
198	EDEN	£6.80
199	KINGSTON-UPON-HULL	£6.80
200	LIVERPOOL	£6.80
201	MANSFIELD	£6.80
202	MID DEVON	£6.80
203	NORTH KESTEVEN	£6.80
204	NORTH NORFOLK	£6.80
205	NORTH NORTHANTS	£6.80
206	NORTH WARWICK	£6.80
207	SEDGEMOOR	£6.80
208	SOMERSET WEST & TAUNTON	£6.80
209	S. LANARKSHIRE (CAMBUS/R'GLEN)	£6.80
210	SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE	£6.80
211	SOUTHEND ON SEA	£6.80
212	TENDRING	£6.80
213	TRAFFORD	£6.80
214	VALE OF GLAMORGAN	£6.80

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
215	WEST LOTHIAN	£6.80
216	WIGAN	£6.80
217	WIRRAL	£6.80
218	WOLVERHAMPTON	£6.80
219	DUNDEE CITY	£6.79
220	CHARNWOOD	£6.75
221	WALSALL	£6.75
222	ABERDEENSHIRE	£6.74
223	MALVERN HILLS	£6.72
224	ANGUS	£6.70
225	BLABY	£6.70
226	CONGLETON	£6.70
227	EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE	£6.70
228	FYLDE	£6.70
229	OADBY & WIGSTON	£6.70
230	ROTHERHAM	£6.70
231	SHEFFIELD	£6.70
232	ABERDEEN CITY	£6.60
233	CONWY	£6.60
234	DUDLEY	£6.60
235	FAREHAM	£6.60
236	FOLKESTONE & HYTHE	£6.60
237	HAVANT	£6.60
238	LANCASTER	£6.60
239	NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE	£6.60
240	ROCHFORD	£6.60
241	S. LANARKSHIRE (E. KILBRIDE)	£6.60
242	SOUTH TYNESIDE	£6.60
243	STRATFORD ON AVON	£6.60
244	WAKEFIELD	£6.60
245	BASSETLAW	£6.50
246	CALDERDALE	£6.50
247	DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY	£6.50
248	EREWASH	£6.50
249	GEDLING	£6.50
250	HALTON	£6.50
251	ORKNEY	£6.50
252	ROSSENDALE	£6.50
253	SEFTON	£6.50
254	STAFFORD	£6.50
255	STIRLING	£6.50
256	TORFAEN	£6.50
257	DONCASTER	£6.48
258	HYNDBURN	£6.42
259	BLAENAU GWENT	£6.40
260	CASTLE POINT	£6.40
261	COUNTY OF HEREFORD	£6.40
262	CREWE & NANTWICH	£6.40
263	DERBYSHIRE DALES	£6.40
264	ELLESMERE PORT	£6.40
265	HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH	£6.40
266	MELTON	£6.40
267	NORTH AYRSHIRE	£6.40
268	NORTHUMBERLAND	£6.40
269	WEST LINDSEY	£6.40
270	WYRE	£6.38
271	WARRINGTON	£6.35
272	PERTH & KINROSS	£6.33
273	ANGLESEY	£6.30
274	BARNSELY	£6.30
275	CLYDEBANK	£6.30
276	DARLINGTON	£6.30
277	SOUTH HOLLAND	£6.30
278	SOUTH RIBBLE	£6.30
279	ST HELENS	£6.30

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
280	REDDITCH	£6.25
281	THANET	£6.21
282	CHORLEY	£6.20
283	COPELAND	£6.20
284	FALKIRK	£6.20
285	FENLAND	£6.20
286	NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE	£6.20
287	SPELTHORNE	£6.20
288	WYCHAVON	£6.20
289	RENFREWSHIRE	£6.15
290	WYRE FOREST	£6.14
291	BRADFORD	£6.10
292	S. LANARKSHIRE (CLYDESDALE)	£6.10
293	NORTHERN IRELAND	£6.06
294	SCOTTISH BORDERS	£6.05
295	ALLERDALE	£6.00
296	BOLTON	£6.00
297	BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	£6.00
298	DENBIGHSHIRE	£6.00
299	DUMBARTON & VALE OF LEVEN	£6.00
300	EAST STAFFORDSHIRE	£6.00
301	GATESHEAD	£6.00
302	GWYNEDD	£6.00
303	KIRKLEES	£6.00
304	KNOWSLEY	£6.00
305	NORTH WEST LEICESTER	£6.00
306	PETERBOROUGH	£6.00
307	POWYS	£6.00
308	PRESTON	£6.00
309	SALFORD	£6.00
310	TELFORD & WREKIN	£6.00
311	THURROCK	£6.00
312	WARWICK	£6.00
313	STOKE-ON-TRENT UA	£5.90
314	VALE ROYAL	£5.90
315	EAST RIDING	£5.85
316	FLINTSHIRE	£5.80
317	LICHFIELD	£5.80
318	MERTHYR TYDFIL	£5.80
319	NEATH PORT TALBOT	£5.80
320	RHONDDA CYNON TAFF	£5.80
321	NORTH EAST DERBYSHIRE	£5.75
322	CAERPHILLY	£5.70
323	ASHFIELD	£5.60
324	MIDDLESBROUGH	£5.60
325	NORTH LANARKSHIRE	£5.60
326	S.LANARKSHIRE (HAMILTON)	£5.60
327	WREXHAM	£5.60
328	NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME	£5.55
329	INVERCLYDE	£5.54
330	PENDLE	£5.50
331	REDCAR & CLEVELAND	£5.50
332	ROCHDALE	£5.50
333	HARTLEPOOL	£5.40
334	SOUTH KESTEVEN	£5.30
335	STAFFS MOORLANDS	£5.20
336	WEST LANCASHIRE	£5.20
337	STOCKTON ON TEES	£5.10
338	CHERWELL	£5.08
339	BURNLEY	£5.00
340	BOLSOVER	£4.60
341	MALDON	£
342	ROUTLAND	£
343	SOUTH DERBYSHIRE	£
344	WEST DEVON	£

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

In this month's edition we feature more road traffic issues relevant to the trade supplied by Patterson Law. These questions are based on real enquiries that we have received from professional drivers.

If you need advice on motoring matters please email e.patterson@pattersonlaw.co.uk or call us on 01626 359800 for free legal advice.

Q I've got 9 points on my licence and just got another four tickets through. They're all by the same camera apart from the fourth which is a different one, but they are all on the same road. Can you help me and tell me if there is a way round this please. I don't want a six-month ban.

A You must respond to each request for information nominating yourself as the driver. If you don't, you'll be prosecuted for failing to give information, an offence that carries 6 points and up to a £1,000 fine.

After that, you will receive a fixed penalty offer for each of the four matters, but you won't be able to accept them. You can only accept a fixed penalty where doing so would leave you on less than 12 points, meaning the case will automatically proceed to court.

When the case gets to court, you will have to enter a plea. You have a couple of options. The first is to tick the box saying you don't want to go to court. They'll initially send you a Notice of Proposed Disqualification making sure you're aware you'll be banned, and after that the court will sentence you to a six-month ban in your absence. You'll go back to having 0 points, but the disqualification and the convictions will still be showing on there.

The second option is to try to avoid a ban. When somebody reaches 12 points the courts have the discretion not to ban if they believe that a ban would cause you exceptional hardship and so that is the argument that we would present. We would firstly ask the court for a hearing. That will trigger the court to list a physical hearing for us to attend. You will have to give live evidence and we will need supporting evidence to prove what we are saying is true.

However, only one argument can be presented every three years. And if it is successful, the effect is that all

of the points are added to your licence but you are simply not disqualified. In your case it means that if you went to court for the first one and presented a successful argument, you may be able to drive but when the last one comes through you would be prohibited from presenting a second argument and you would inevitably be disqualified. So the key in your case is to tie all matters together so we can present one argument covering everything. We need to do that by way of application.

Q I've been charged with driving a mechanically propelled vehicle on a road/in a public place without due care or attention on the XXXX ... The vehicle is registered to myself and was recovered by the police. Forensics were conducted. The driver airbag was deployed and there were blood smears over the airbag which has not been tested due to saliva being in the same area which has been tested and came back to myself. Paperwork states the court date given XXXX at XXXX Magistrates' Court.

A You must attend the hearing. If you don't attend then you risk them sentencing you in absence, or worse still, issuing a warrant for your arrest.

If you plead guilty, you will be at risk of 3-9 points. The court will have to determine two factors in deciding sentence. Harm and culpability. Harm means accidents/damage. Culpability means how culpable you are - i.e. whether it was an accident, whether you were on your phone, whether you were speeding or overtaking. If there's both, you would be in the top bracket (7-9 points or a ban). If there's one or the other, it's a middle bracket offence (5-6 points), and if there's neither, low level (3-4 points).

From what you have said, clearly there is some damage here so it would be at least five or six points. The question is whether there is culpability as well and whether the court would consider it a top level offence.

Re: the financial penalties, by pleading guilty at the earliest opportunity you would maintain maximum credit in sentence, meaning you will receive a fine of 150% of your weekly income minus 1/3 for pleading guilty, a victim surcharge of 40% of the fine and costs of about £100. You would also have the best opportunity of keeping the points to the minimum.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

The second option is to plead not guilty. If you plead not guilty the matter will be adjourned to a later date for trial. Between then and the trial, we would be able to examine your defence. If we were able to successfully defend you, of course you would not receive points and you would be entitled to a costs order so that you could be reimbursed your reasonable legal fees incurred. But the risk is that if you were found guilty after trial, you would have lost credit in sentencing, meaning you would receive higher fines and costs.

In terms of the fine it would remain at 150% of your weekly income and this also means the victim surcharge will be higher (40% of the fine), and costs would increase to in the region £700. You may also receive more points – so we have an increased risk of your licence being disqualified.

But initially I would like to check the evidence before we see if there's scope to defend you. We need to examine what evidence of driving is there. Has anyone seen you behind the wheel? Was any other DNA found on the airbag (if not, it's likely the court would conclude that you must have been in the driver seat at the point of collision)? Is it your car and are you the only one insured? Have you made any admissions to the police? These are all questions we will need to examine before we decide on plea.

Q I've been served a single justice procedure notice for a speeding offence. This appears to be failing to name a driver but I was unaware of the offence in the first place and did not receive the letter. It appears to be a genuine speeding ticket and I am the only registered driver, it was definitely me driving the car. what do I do?

A The reason they have charged you for failing to give information is because they will be alleging that you have not provided details of who was driving at the time the speeding offence was committed. When a camera detected offence is committed, such as speeding or driving through a red light, or even hit and run cases where somebody has had an accident and not exchanged details, the starting point is that the police need to identify who was driving. So they write to the registered keeper to ask them to nominate the driver, and if the registered keeper does not nominate the driver then they are prosecuted for failing to

provide driver information. So in your case they are alleging that you have failed to give these details. They will have charged you with this offence and taken you to court.

At this point, you have a couple of options, depending on what you're charged with. If you're charged with both speeding AND failing to give information, the first option is to plead guilty to the speeding matter now, and agree a basis of plea with the prosecution, where in return they discontinue with failing to provide driver information.

Four out of five times the prosecution are happy to agree. If they do, we should be able to get you points and a fine in your absence. I would hope to keep the fines and costs down to about 300 or £400 in total. The points you would receive depends on the speed.

If you're charged with failing to provide driver information ONLY, your only choice is to either plead guilty and take 6 points and fines now (c. £800 in total), or defend. If you pleaded not guilty the case would be adjourned to a later date for trial. The defence we would have to put forward to failing to give information is that you did not get it. BUT – we need to examine why you didn't get it. If the reason you didn't get it is your fault, so for example if you are sloppy with your post and you've accidentally thrown it away, or you moved address and you didn't update your details, or if you were on holiday so never picked it up, the court will find that it's your fault and find you responsible. But if it's correctly registered to you at your home, but you didn't get it perhaps due to postal problems, then we have a defence and we can take it to trial.

If you are found not guilty, you receive no fines or points. But it is risky because it would leave failing to give information open, and if you were found guilty of that you would then receive 6 points and up to a £1,000 fine, which is of course a lot higher than the speeding matter.

For advice on motoring matters, email advice@pattersonlaw.co.uk
For updates on road traffic law follow us on [facebook.com/PattersonLawMotoringSolicitors](https://www.facebook.com/PattersonLawMotoringSolicitors) or twitter.com/Patterson_law_

from Ireland



DUBLIN CABBIE MUST PAY PASSENGER €1,600 AFTER 'INTERROGATION'

A Dublin taxi driver must pay €1,600 to a female passenger as redress after he subjected her to "interrogation" by repeatedly asking if she was single or lived alone and saying, "You look sexy".

Lucas Bittencourt, 39, was prosecuted by the National Transport Authority (NTA). He pleaded guilty to using obscene and offensive language toward a passenger on 14 May last year when he appeared at Dublin District Court on 11 March.

Prosecution solicitor Jason Teahan said the woman flagged down the taxi in Dublin city centre, sat in the back seat, and they "chatted generally." Bittencourt said he was Brazilian, but conversation became "a bit more personal, and he asked her, 'Do you live alone?' before they arrived".

When he reached her destination, he unbuckled his seat, turned and said: "I thought you were single. Do you live alone?". The woman was "taken aback" and felt "a bit uncomfortable".

Mr Teahan told the judge that Bittencourt then said, "I didn't get a good look at you." He put the light on and told her, "You look good; you look sexy."

At this stage, she felt "very uncomfortable", paid the fare and got out of the taxi".

She complained to the NTA and Bittencourt was found via the payment app she had used. Bittencourt was questioned and made a general denial, telling the NTA he was sorry for any offence caused, although he couldn't recall the specifics of the trip.

Defence counsel Patrick Jackson said his client has been a taxi driver for 15 years with an unblemished record and generally sent his earnings home. He was instructed to fully apologise on his client's behalf for any inappropriateness.

Mr Jackson said: "Any inappropriate behaviour was out of character", and asked the judge to consider applying the Probation of Offenders Act (POA), sparing his client a criminal conviction. The offence does not carry a jail sentence but a €2,500 fine.

Judge Anthony Halpin deemed it a serious case and said: "It trespassed upon the injured party's right to safe passage without being subjected to inter-

rogation about sensitive personal matters." He said the driver had a "statutory duty to respect his customers and not make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe".

To consider the POA, the Judge required €400 toward the NTA's cost and €1,600 for the victim to redress the harm she experienced, saying: "This court takes that very seriously". He added if Bittencourt had been convicted following a contested hearing, he may have lost the right to drive a taxi.

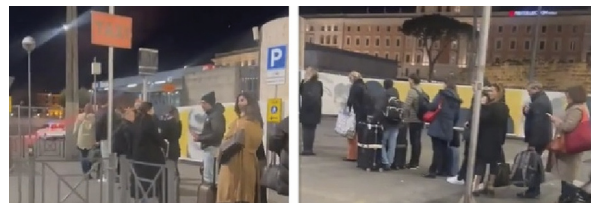
The defence said the driver needed time to pay.

The case was adjourned until December.

from Italy



ROME TAXI CRISIS: 1.3 MILLION CALLS A MONTH UNANSWERED



Italian cities including Rome and Milan are still suffering from a chronic shortage of taxis despite efforts by the government to alleviate the problem.

In Rome some 1.3 million telephone requests for taxis are unsuccessful each month, while in Milan that number is around half a million a month.

Last August the rightwing coalition, led by Giorgia Meloni, approved new regulations, as part of the so-called Asset decree, that allow larger cities to increase the number of taxi licences by 20% to meet demand.

However the move has been fiercely opposed by taxi drivers, a powerful lobby in Italy, who regularly threaten to strike in protest at attempt to enact new measures.

The last time the number of licences was increased in Rome was in 2005 while in Milan it was 2003.

Italy's antitrust regulator has repeatedly called for more taxis to be introduced in Rome and Milan, which have 7,692 taxis and 4,885 taxis respectively.

Italian tourism minister Daniela Santanché recently posted a viral video on social media showing a lengthy queue for taxis at Rome's Termini station, describing the scene as "a nice business card for tourists arriving in the capital!!"

WORLDWIDE TAXI FOCUS

from South Africa



TEEN IN SCHOOL UNIFORM CAUGHT DRIVING TAXI CARRYING PUPILS

A 16-year-old boy, in school uniform, was arrested in Scottsville for driving a taxi carrying fellow pupils after provincial Principal Inspector Sipiwe Zuma spotted the vehicle being driven by the youngster.

"The road is an unsafe space and you need someone with experience driving and someone who is qualified to operate a motor vehicle on a public road and when I noticed someone wearing (a school) uniform driving, it alarmed me and I turned around immediately."

Transport secretary and uMgungundlovu District chairperson, Bheki Bhengu, said an investigation would be carried out to find out if the owners of these taxis are from scholar transport or from the main association, which is part of the SA National Taxi Council (Santaco).

Bhengu added that this is the first time he had come across pupils being caught transporting other children. He said they may have been doing it all along, but never been caught.

One of the attackers then approached the couple and delivered multiple blows to the man with a sign as bystanders in the background yelled at them to stop.

A few days later prosecutors reported

that they had arrested two taxi drivers who participated in the beating of the couple.

Prosecutors in the coastal state of Quintana Roo said the two drivers were arrested on charges of drug possession, after they were found to be carrying marijuana and cocaine in their taxis, however the cabbies were not immediately charged in relation to the attack the previous week.

Authorities offered no further information on the tourists, or whether they were injured in the night-time attack. But they did say the permits for the two suspects' taxicabs would be cancelled.



from Mexico



TOURISTS ARE SAVAGELY BEATEN BY PLAYA DEL CARMEN TAXI DRIVERS

Disturbing video footage has captured the moment a German tourist couple was savagely beaten by taxi drivers in the Mexico resort city of Playa del Carmen. The victims were reportedly not happy with the exorbitant fare the driver had charged them after dropping them off by a night club.

One of the three taxi drivers could be seen pounding the man with a sign while another walked over and kicked the defenceless victim.

His female companion leaned over him in an attempt to block the blows, but a third driver kicked the man repeatedly. The woman could be heard shouting, 'Stop it,' while two other drivers stood by and did nothing to stop the assault.

from Ghana



GHANAIAN DRIVER FILLS TAXI WITH 50 BAGS OF CHARCOAL

A group of people who needed to transport several bags of charcoal to a market hired a taxi to convey them. Except for the driver's seat, everywhere in the Opel Cadet was filled with sacks of charcoal.

In a video shared on X, after the taxi was filled with 50 huge sacks of charcoal, the driver attempted to move the vehicle but could not. Some men who helped load the charcoal into the taxi then pushed the car as it reversed and it later headed on its way. Several Ghanaians who saw the video, commented on it. Most people raised questions about road safety.



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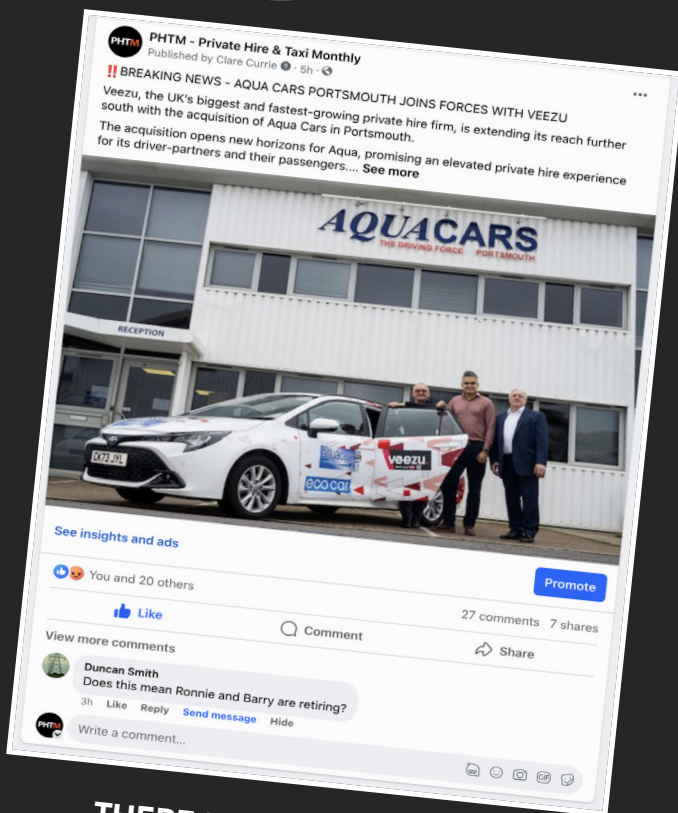
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CAN WILLIE'S DOMINANCE EXTEND TO AINTREE?

Seldom (if ever) has there been such dominance in the National Hunt game as that currently being enjoyed by Willie Mullins. Now over 100 Festival winners with another nine wins, including five Grade 1's at Cheltenham which followed the total dominance he experienced at the Dublin Racing Festival, surely a major plundering of the Grand National meeting is only a matter of time.

GRAND NATIONAL

At the recent declaration stage, 29 of the 34 horses left in are trained in Ireland. The one failing grace is that the likely favourite and last year's winner is from these shores, but it would be folly to ignore an Irish winner? And folly it would be and my headline tip is the J P McManus owned and Willie Mullins' trained **MEETING OF THE WATERS**, currently available around the 14/1 mark.



Some things need to be made clear. The race is not the lottery it once was. Safety issues have rendered it a lot less challenging than 20 years ago; the drops are less severe, the heights are less challenging and more high quality horses both compete and complete the marathon distance.

Added to the number of runners being reduced to 34 from 40, and the cavalry charge to the first being artificially adjusted, it is now a race for those at the top of the weights, not those at the bottom...No FOINAVON HERE!!!

So, numbers 1-12 will be favoured (as it's a handicap, riding numbers are allocated due to weight) and preference is to Mullins' horse after its very encouraging run in the Ultima at Cheltenham. The other form line is the Irish one and another horse from Closutton should be noted, namely **I AM MAXIMUS** at 10/1.

WORLD SNOOKER

It's also the month when the World Snooker Championship begins in Sheffield, and regular readers will know that the main fancy I have this year is not Rocket Ronnie despite him being the best player on the planet. His internal demons always make him

unbackable in my mind, it's bad enough losing money, what I can't abide is his uncaring (portrayed) attitude.

The man in form is clearly **JUDD TRUMP**

and at 9/2 he will do for me. A note of caution: Neil Robertson has now fallen out



of the top 16 and will have to pre-qualify and as such, should he qualify, will be drawn in a straight draw against one of the top 16. Dangerous lurker beware, he is playing well and could conceivably meet Ronnie in round 1.

THE MASTERS

Anyone got hay fever?

Well beware, the azaleas are in bloom in Augusta for the select Masters field. Scottie Scheffler looks on a different planet right now but 9/2 is not a working man's price in this field. Rory has more demons than Ronnie, and Rahms recent defection to LIV needs more acclimatisation.

So to who?

My main fancies, (you can get 8 or even 10 places if you shop around are **XANDER SCHAUFFELE** at 25/1 and **WYNDHAM CLARK** at 33/1.

That should tee us up nicely (geddit?) for...

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE



UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

It's the quarter final stage in the next week and I expect the semi-final draw to be between **BAYERN MUNICH** and **REAL MADRID** and **PSG** and **ATLETICO**.

And yes, I am a Man City fan, but as I watch them all the time I can see their failings. To my mind they are blunt, toothless and ripe for picking by my main fancy for the tournament...**REAL MADRID** at 13/2.

I hope I'm proved wrong but money is money.

In the UEFA Europa league, **LIVERPOOL** look unbeatable in Jurgen's last hurrah and 2/1 represents excellent value.

Good punting...

Bernie the Book

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